FABLES & HUMOUR

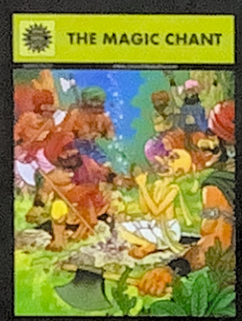
THE MIRACULOUS CONCH

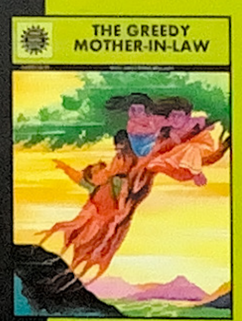
A very poor man is given a magical conch – when it is put in a pot and food is cooked with it, the pot supplies an endless quantity of very delicious food. When the conch goes missing, the man and his companions, a dog and a cat, must find it before they starve.
A tyrannical king decrees that anyone who wants a favour from him, has to play chess with him. Sitting near by will be the king's cat, with seven lamps balanced on her tail. If she moves and even a drop of oil is spilt, the king will do as his opponent wants. But if the cat remains still, the person will become the king's slave!
The hilarious adventures in this book, are taken from John Dorairaj's collection of folk tales.

OTHER ACK FABLES & HUMOUR:

THE PIOUS CAT

THE BRIDEGROOM'S RING


THE MAGIC CHANT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THE MIRACULOUS CONCH

AND A GAME OF CHESS

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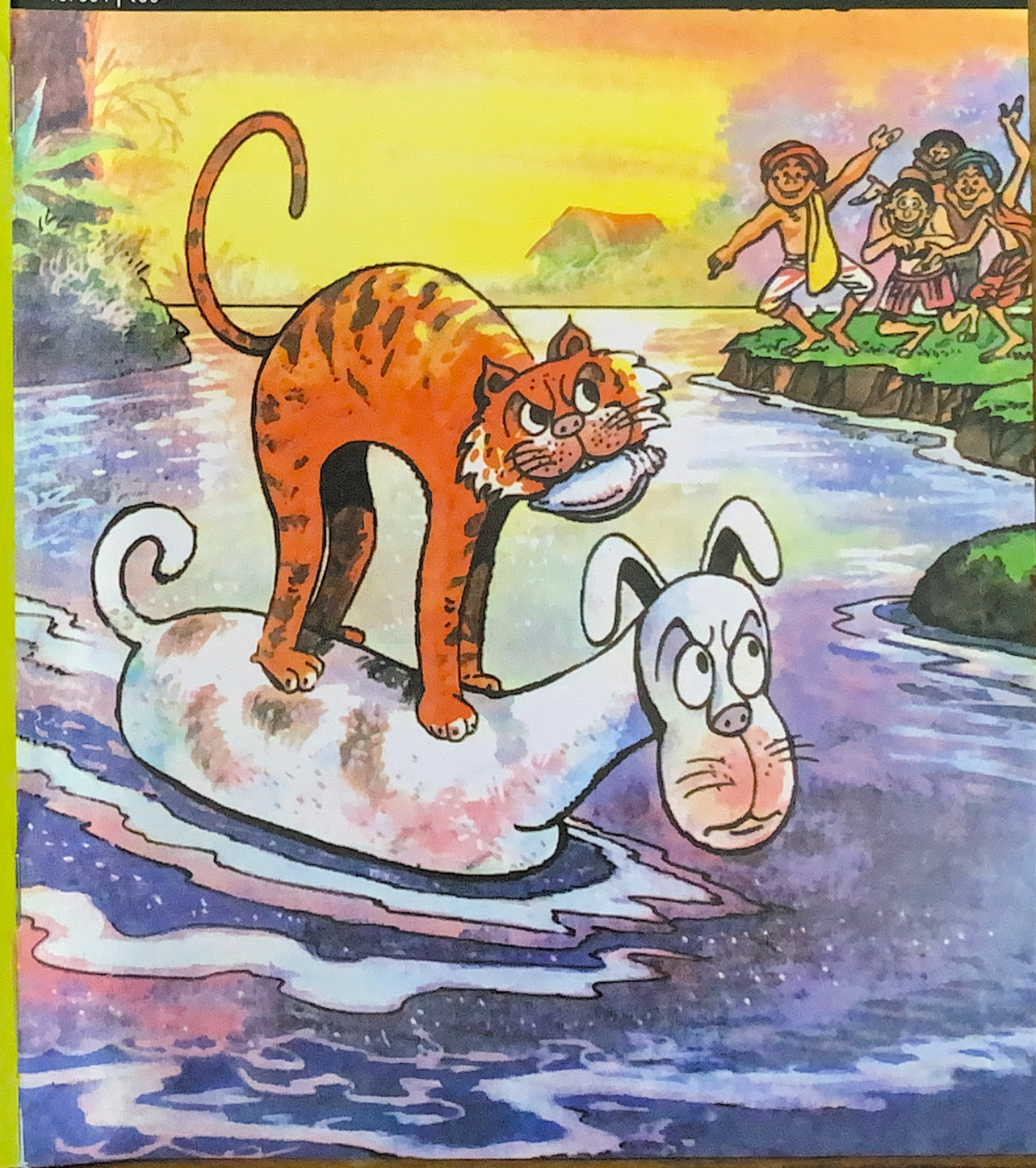
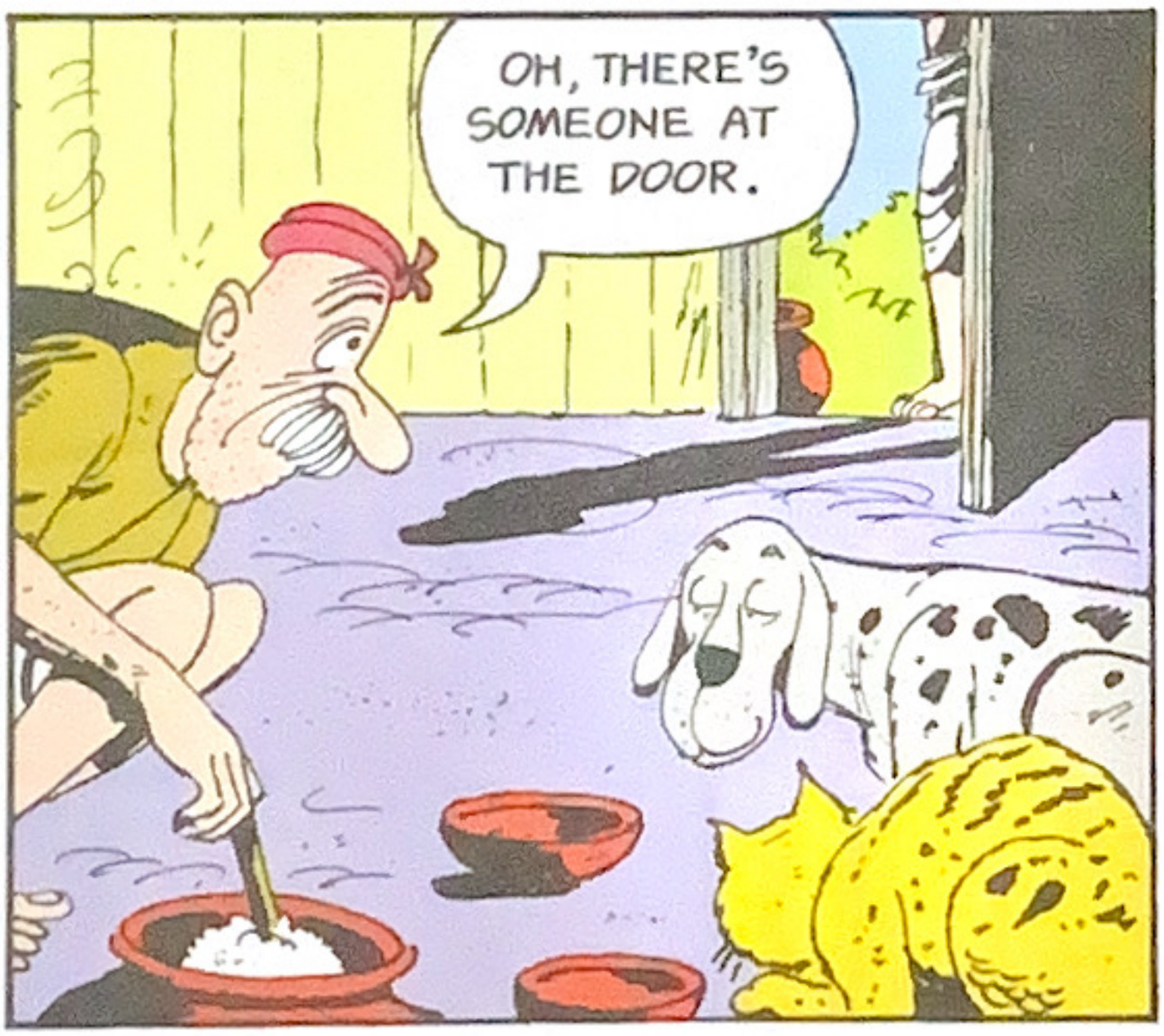
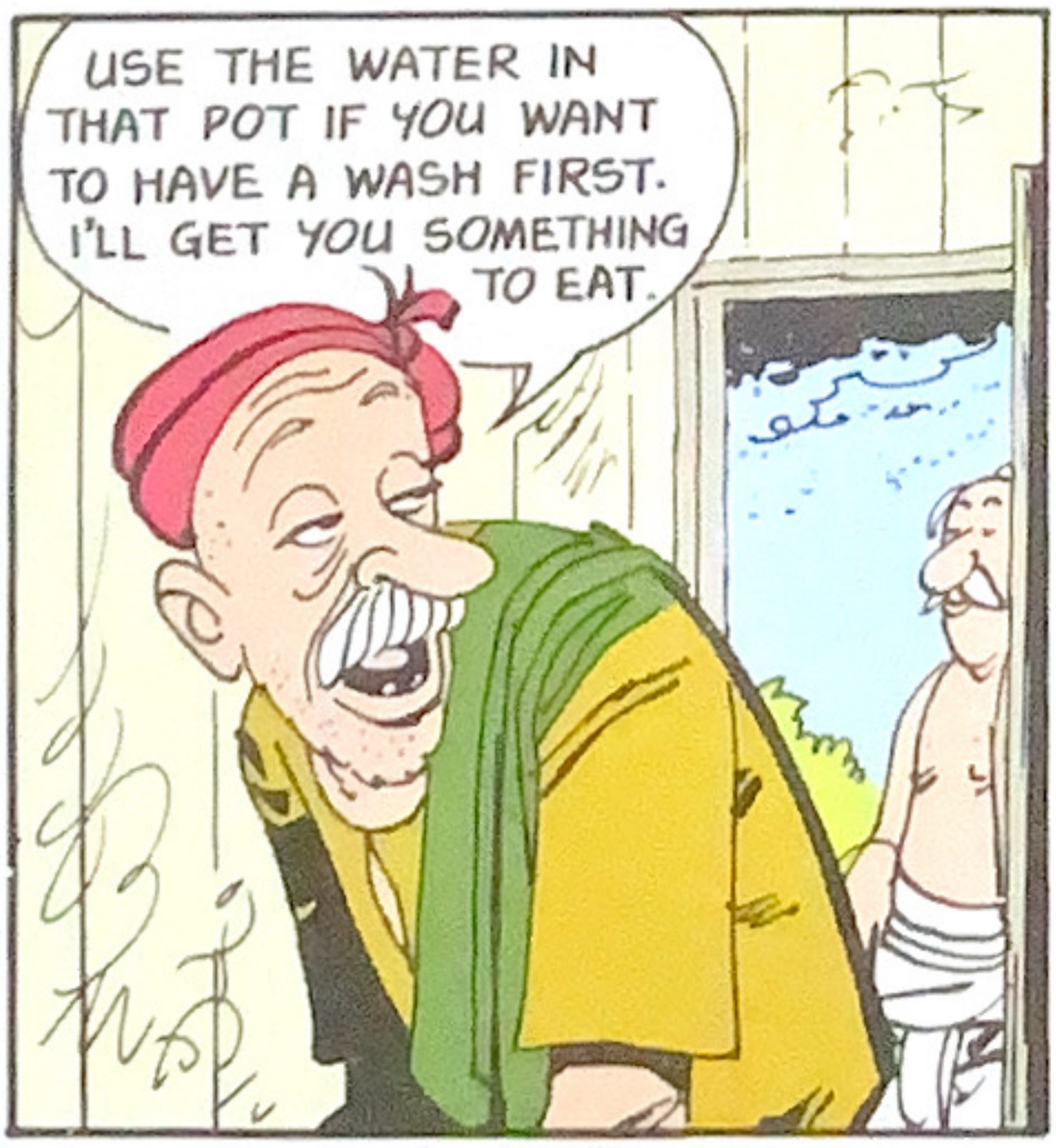
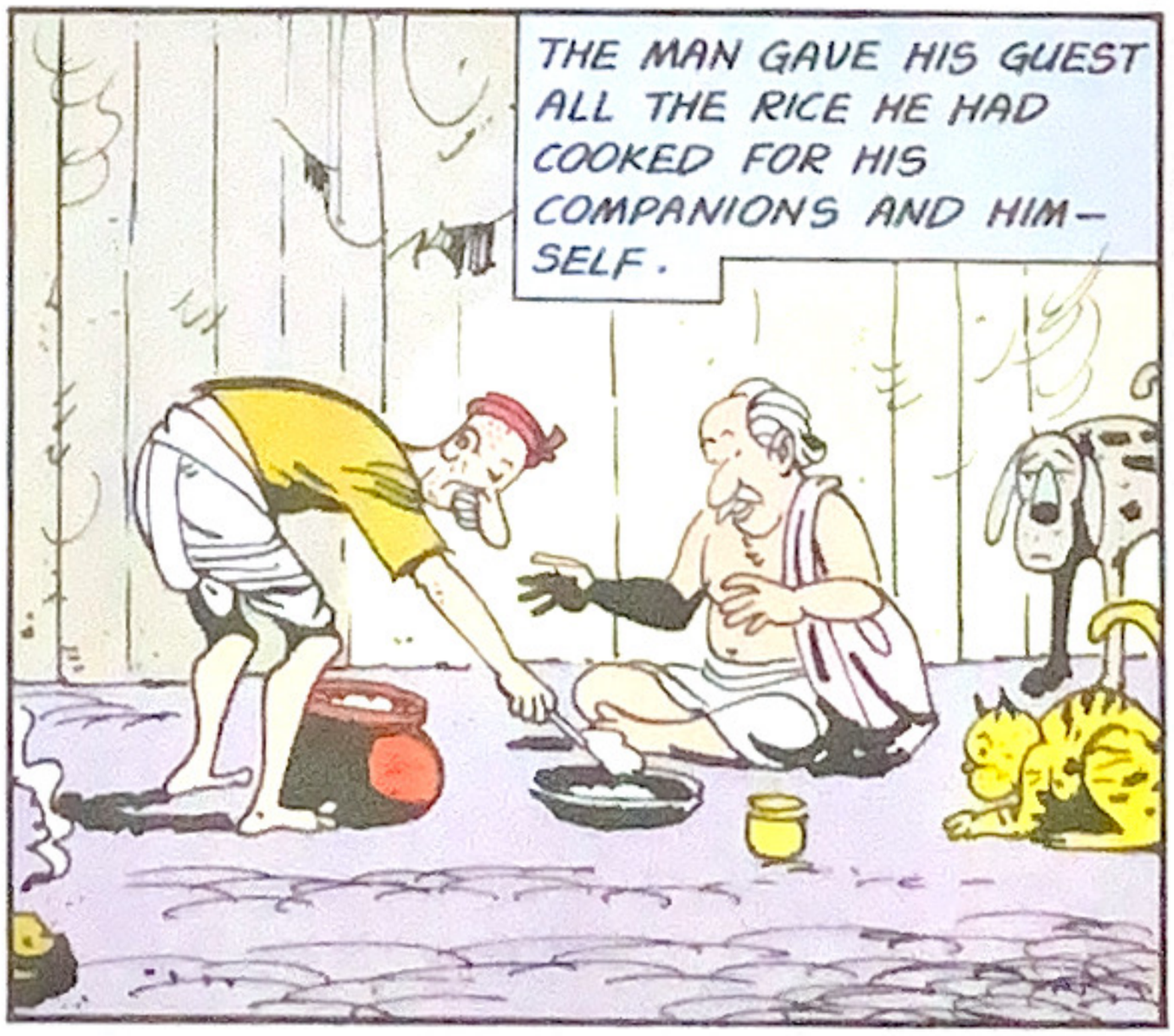


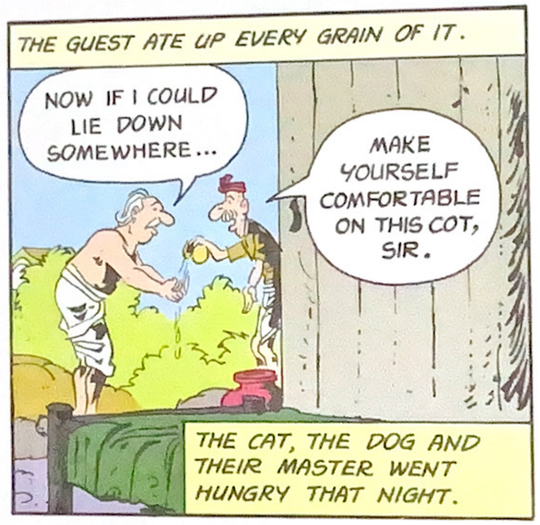
THE MIRACULOUS CONCH

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A MAN WHO WAS POOR BUT GENEROUS. HIS ONLY COMPANIONS WERE A CAT AND A DOG.

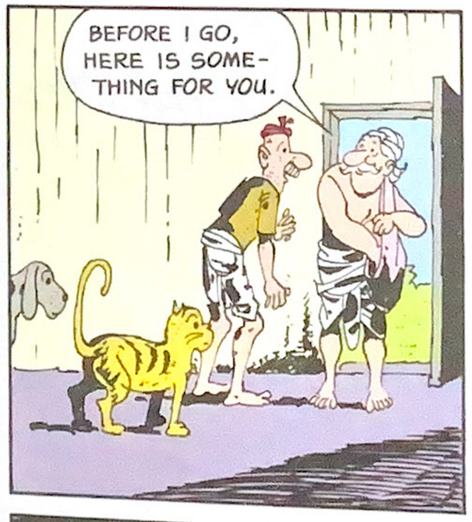




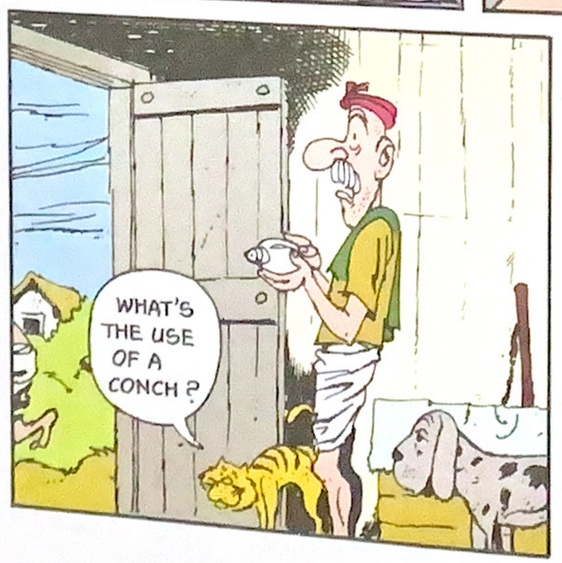



THE GUEST ATE UP EVERY GRAIN OF IT.
NOW IF I COULD LIE DOWN SOMEWHERE...
MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE ON THIS COT, SIR.
THE CAT, THE DOG AND THEIR MASTER WENT HUNGRY THAT NIGHT.

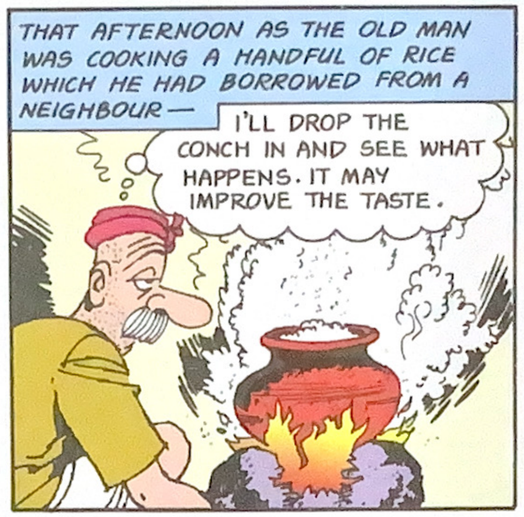
EARLY NEXT MORNING —
I FEEL REFRESHED. I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.


BEFORE I GO, HERE IS SOME-THING FOR YOU.

DROP THAT CONCH INTO THE POT THE NEXT TIME YOU COOK RICE.

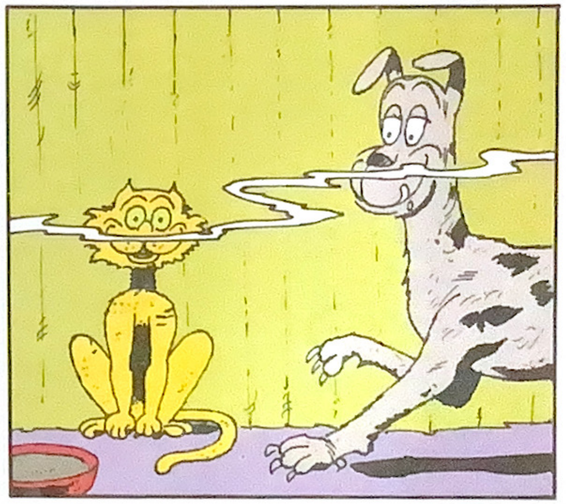

WHAT'S THE USE OF A CONCH ?

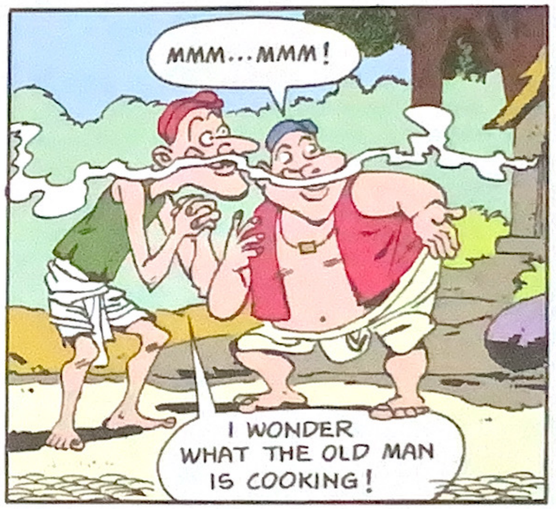
NOW IF IT HAD BEEN MONEY, OUR MASTER COULD HAVE BOUGHT US SOME FOOD. I AM STARVING.


THAT AFTERNOON AS THE OLD MAN WAS COOKING A HANDFUL OF RICE WHICH HE HAD BORROWED FROM A NEIGHBOUR —
I'LL DROP THE CONCH IN AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS. IT MAY IMPROVE THE TASTE.

THE MOMENT HE DROPPED THE CONCH INTO THE POT...

...A DELICIOUS AROMA ROSE UP FROM IT.

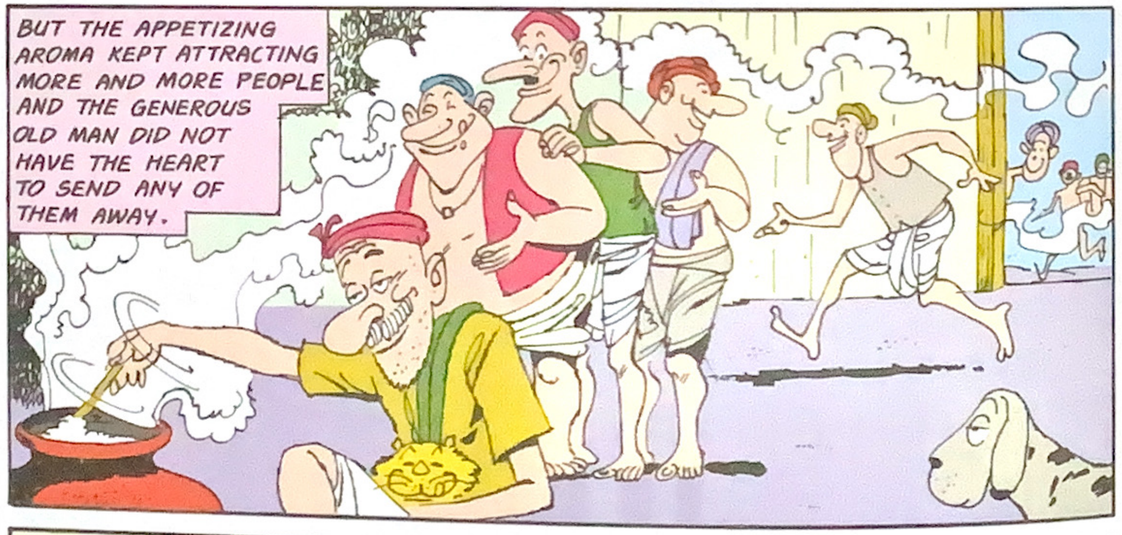



MMM...MMM!
I WONDER WHAT THE OLD MAN IS COOKING!

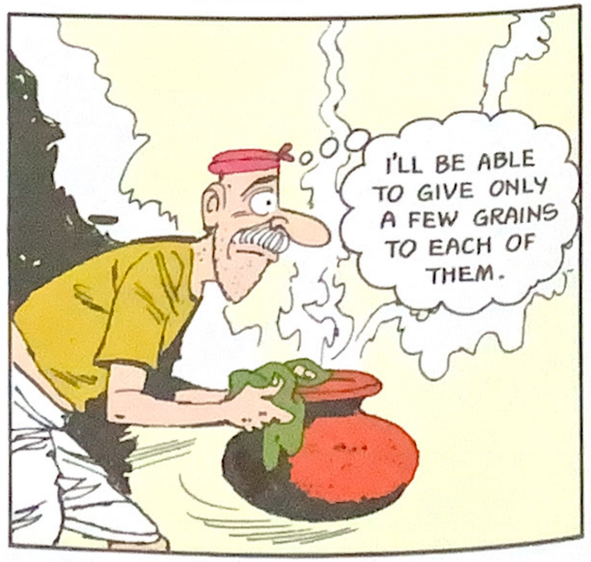
LET'S FIND OUT!

WHAT ARE YOU COOKING, FRIEND?
RICE.

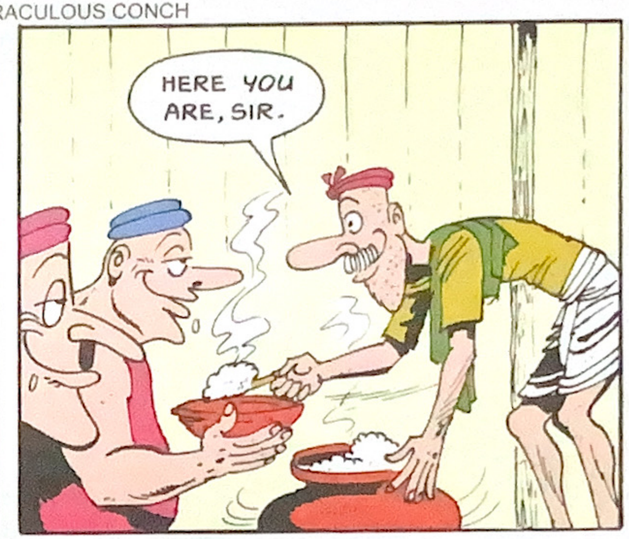
MAY WE HAVE SOME?
CERTAINLY. AS SOON AS IT'S DONE.


BUT THE APPETIZING AROMA KEPT ATTRACTING MORE AND MORE PEOPLE AND THE GENEROUS OLD MAN DID NOT HAVE THE HEART TO SEND ANY OF THEM AWAY.

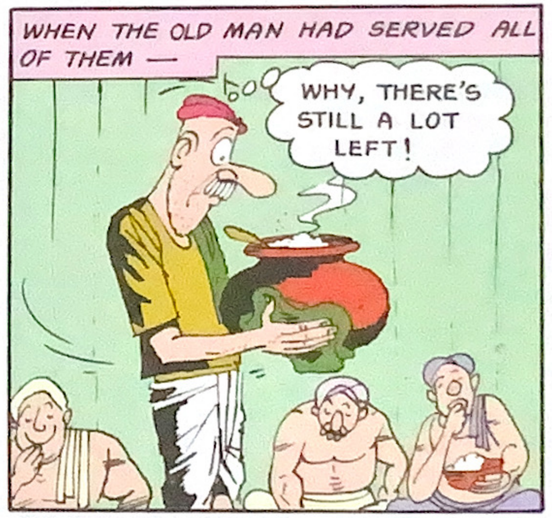
SO WHEN THE RICE WAS READY THERE WERE A LOT OF PEOPLE WAITING TO EAT IT.

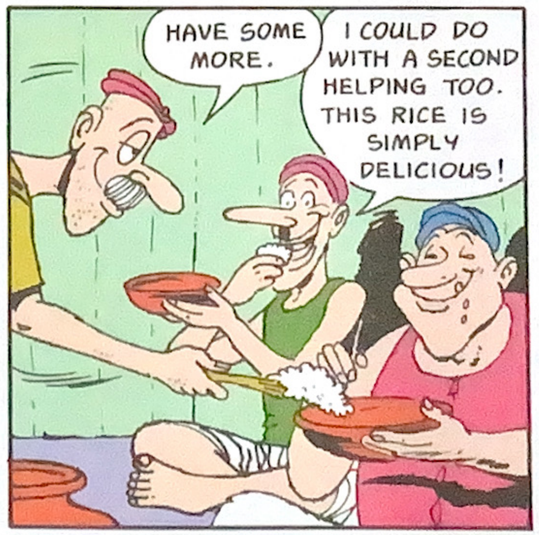

I'LL BE ABLE TO GIVE ONLY A FEW GRAINS TO EACH OF THEM.

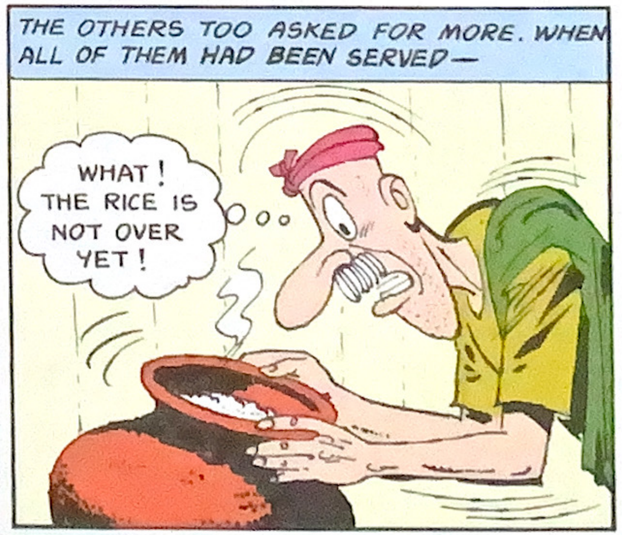
WE'LL HAVE TO GO HUNGRY AGAIN. ALL THIS FASTING IS BAD FOR MY HEALTH... MY FUR IS BEGINNING TO FALL OFF.

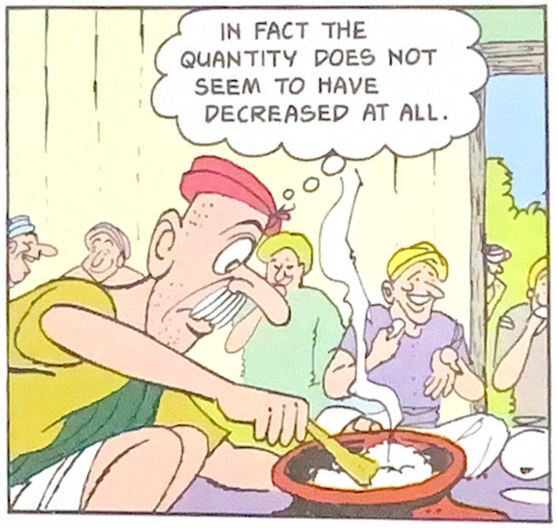

HERE YOU ARE, SIR.

AND A LITTLE FOR YOU.


WHEN THE OLD MAN HAD SERVED ALL OF THEM —
WHY, THERE'S STILL A LOT LEFT!

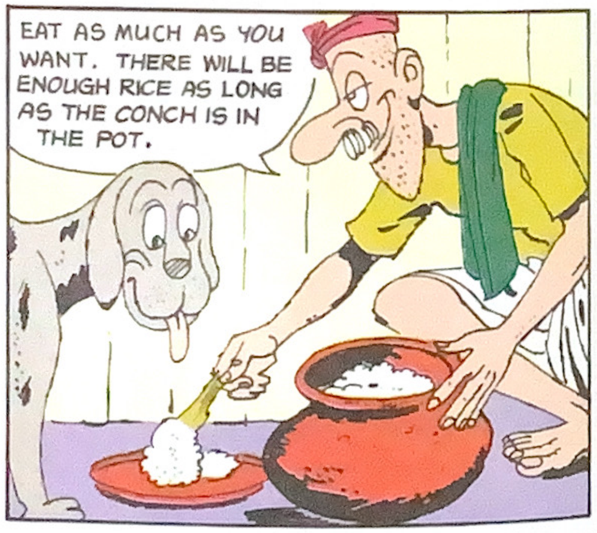

HAVE SOME MORE.
I COULD DO WITH A SECOND HELPING TOO. THIS RICE IS SIMPLY DELICIOUS!

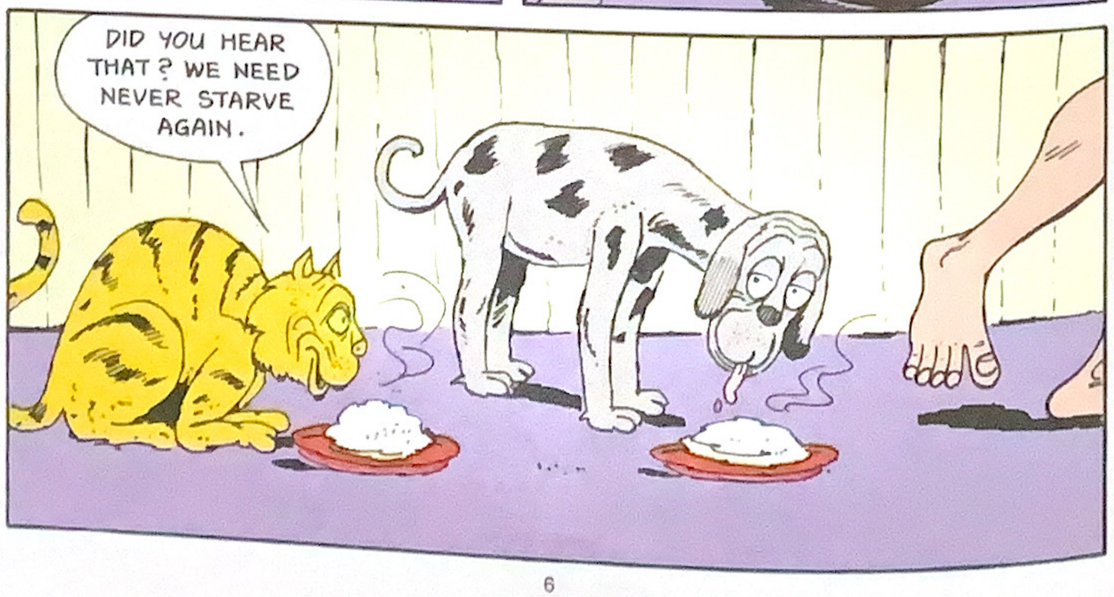

THE OTHERS TOO ASKED FOR MORE. WHEN ALL OF THEM HAD BEEN SERVED—
WHAT! THE RICE IS NOT OVER YET!


IN FACT THE QUANTITY DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE DECREASED AT ALL.

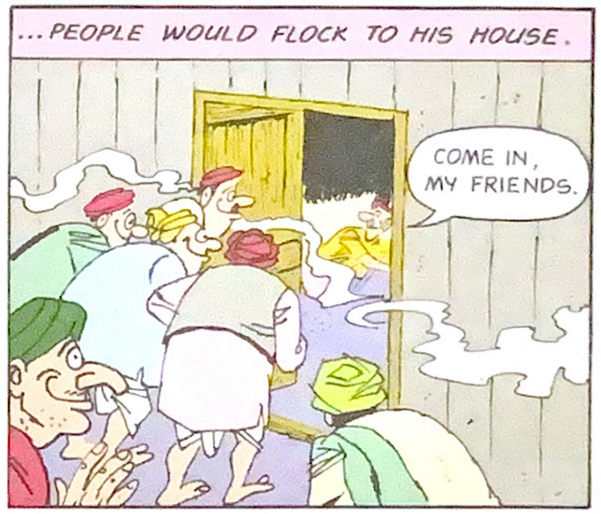
IT COULD ONLY BE DUE TO THE CONCH. IT MUST BE A MAGICAL ONE.

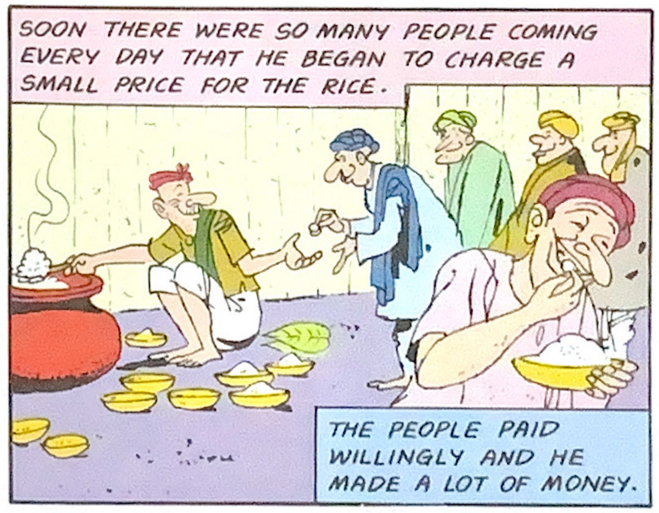
HERE, MY FRIENDS. I'M SORRY I KEPT YOU WAITING FOR SO LONG.


EAT AS MUCH AS YOU WANT. THERE WILL BE ENOUGH RICE AS LONG AS THE CONCH IS IN THE POT.


DID YOU HEAR THAT? WE NEED NEVER STARVE AGAIN.

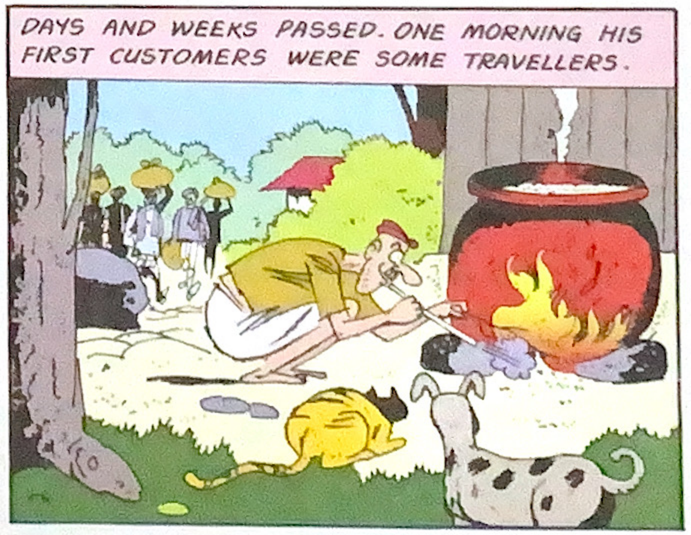
EVERY TIME THE OLD MAN COOKED RICE..

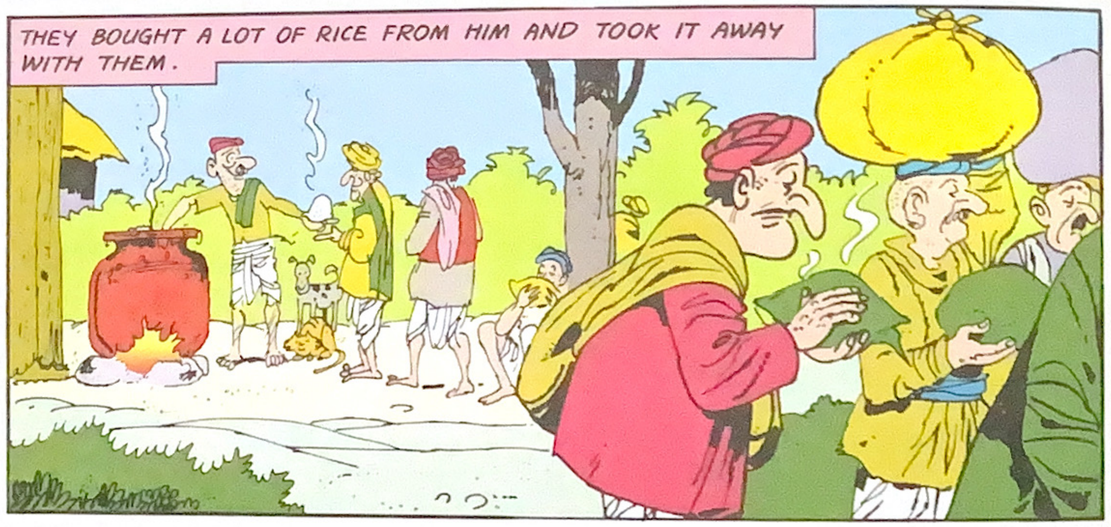

...PEOPLE WOULD FLOCK TO HIS HOUSE.
COME IN, MY FRIENDS.

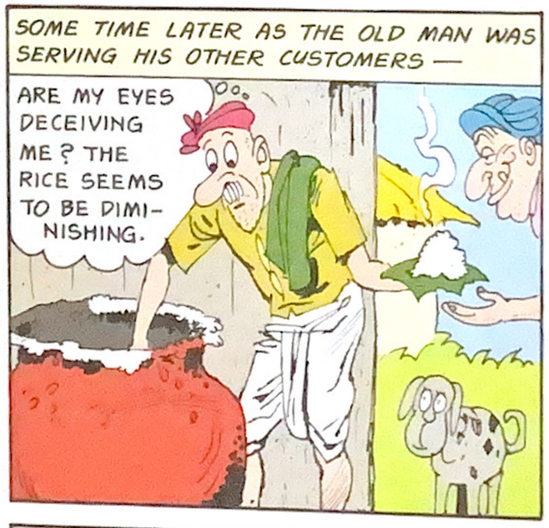

SOON THERE WERE SO MANY PEOPLE COMING EVERY DAY THAT HE BEGAN TO CHARGE A SMALL PRICE FOR THE RICE.
THE PEOPLE PAID WILLINGLY AND HE MADE A LOT OF MONEY.

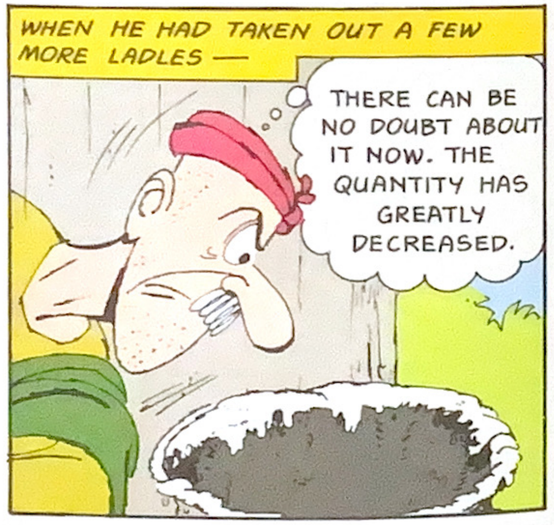
THE CAT AND THE DOG TOO BECAME FAT WITH THE GOOD FOOD THEY ATE.
THIS IS THE SORT OF LIFE I LOVE. PLENTY TO EAT...

...AND NO WORK TO DO.

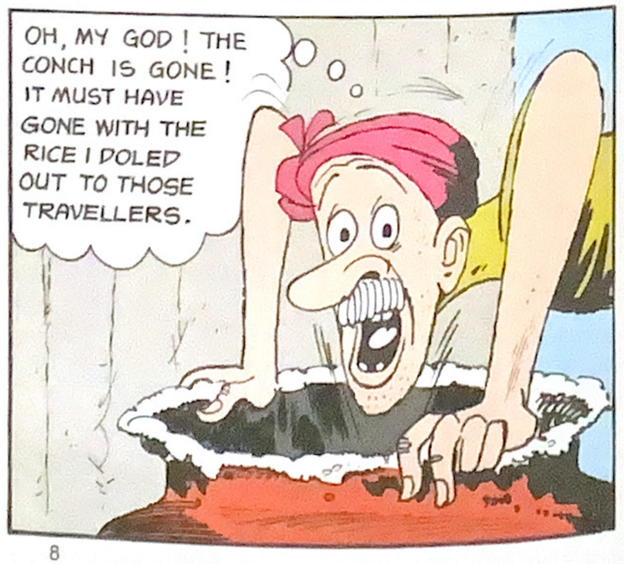

DAYS AND WEEKS PASSED. ONE MORNING HIS FIRST CUSTOMERS WERE SOME TRAVELLERS.


THEY BOUGHT A LOT OF RICE FROM HIM AND TOOK IT AWAY WITH THEM.


SOME TIME LATER AS THE OLD MAN WAS SERVING HIS OTHER CUSTOMERS —
ARE MY EYES DECEIVING ME? THE RICE SEEMS TO BE DIMINISHING.

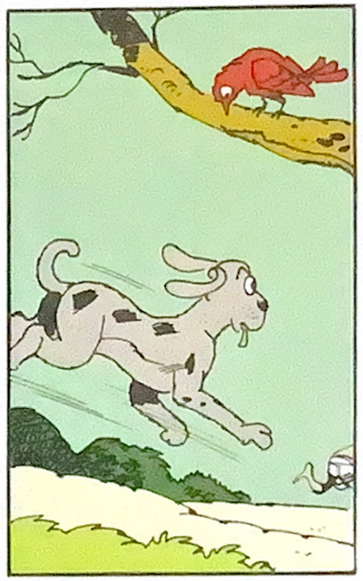

WHEN HE HAD TAKEN OUT A FEW MORE LADLES —
THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT ABOUT IT NOW. THE QUANTITY HAS GREATLY DECREASED.

THE CONCH! WHERE IS THE CONCH?


OH, MY GOD! THE CONCH IS GONE! IT MUST HAVE GONE WITH THE RICE I DOLED OUT TO THOSE TRAVELLERS.

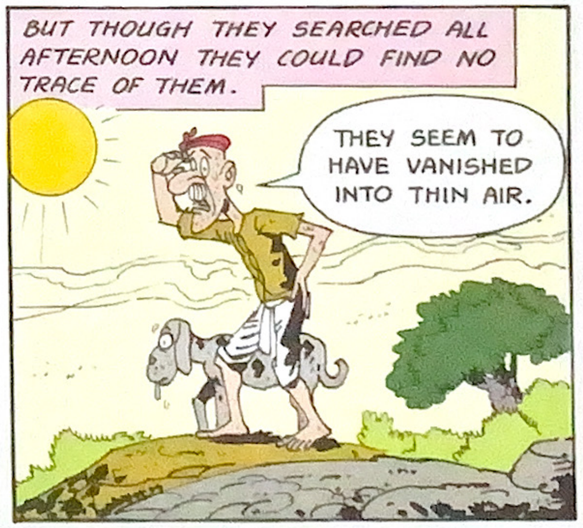
THEY CAN'T HAVE GONE FAR. I MUST FIND THEM.

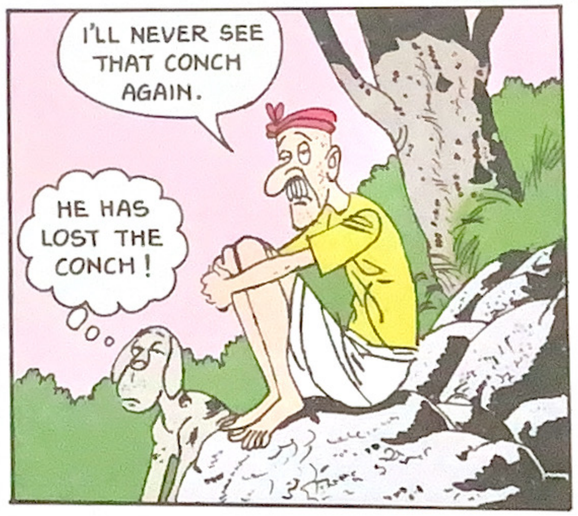
WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR MASTER?
SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED. HE MAY NEED ME.



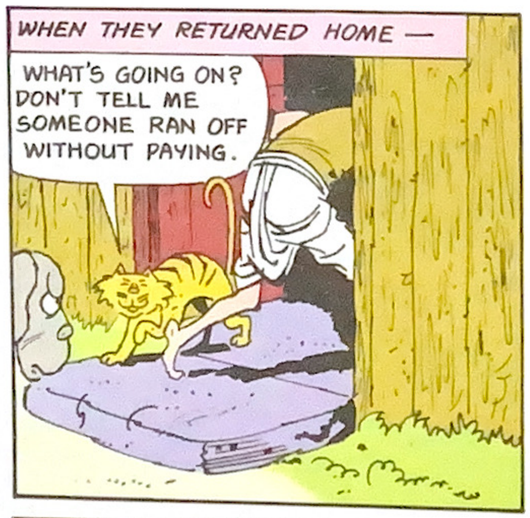
THE TRAVELLERS! LOOK FOR THE TRAVELLERS!

MAN AND DOG BEGAN TO SEARCH FRANTICALLY FOR THE TRAVELLERS.

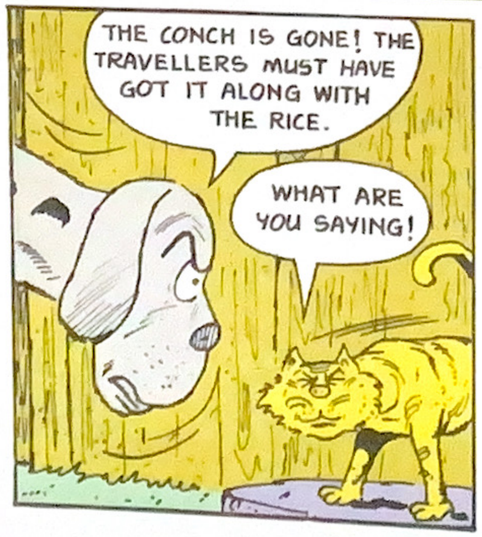

BUT THOUGH THEY SEARCHED ALL AFTERNOON THEY COULD FIND NO TRACE OF THEM.
THEY SEEM TO HAVE VANISHED INTO THIN AIR.

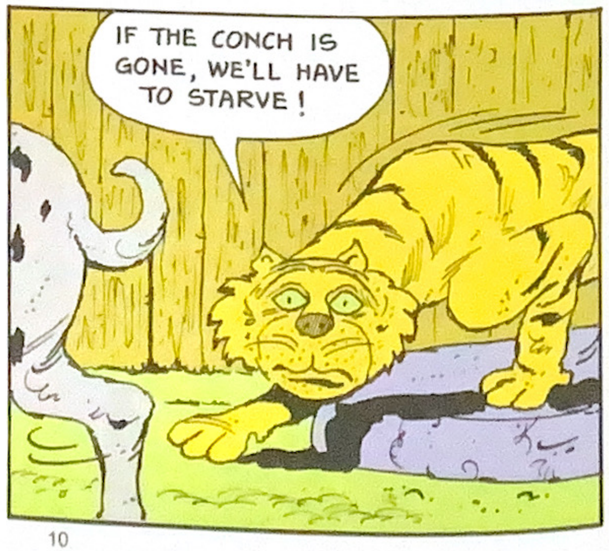

I'LL NEVER SEE THAT CONCH AGAIN.
HE HAS LOST THE CONCH!

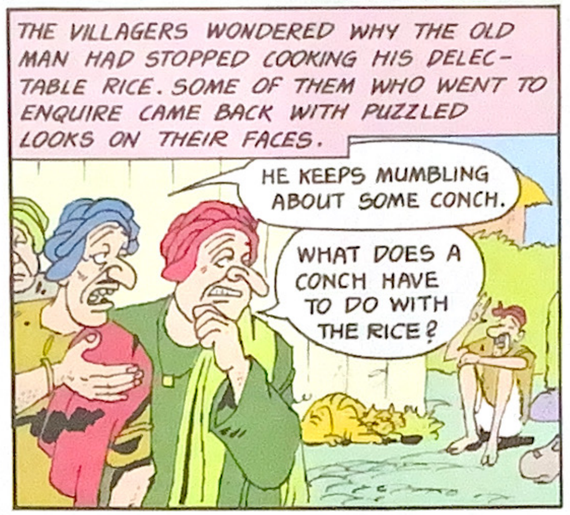
OH, WHAT A SAD DAY!

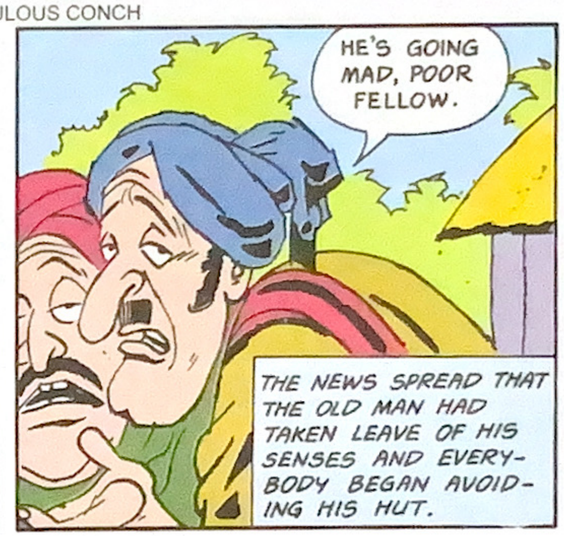

WHEN THEY RETURNED HOME —
WHAT'S GOING ON? DON'T TELL ME SOMEONE RAN OFF WITHOUT PAYING.

YOU STUPID CREATURE! DO YOU THINK OUR MASTER WOULD RUN AFTER SOMEONE FOR A FEW COINS!

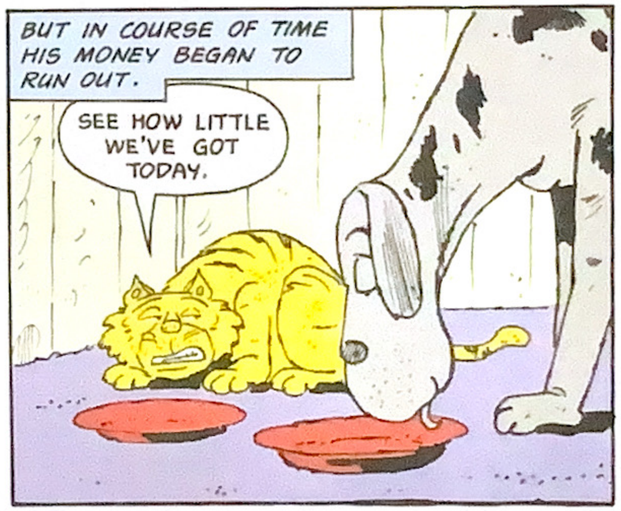

THE CONCH IS GONE! THE TRAVELLERS MUST HAVE GOT IT ALONG WITH THE RICE.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!


IF THE CONCH IS GONE, WE'LL HAVE TO STARVE!


THE VILLAGERS WONDERED WHY THE OLD MAN HAD STOPPED COOKING HIS DELECTABLE RICE. SOME OF THEM WHO WENT TO ENQUIRE CAME BACK WITH PUZZLED LOOKS ON THEIR FACES.
HE KEEPS MUMBLING ABOUT SOME CONCH.
WHAT DOES A CONCH HAVE TO DO WITH THE RICE?


HE'S GOING MAD, POOR FELLOW.
THE NEWS SPREAD THAT THE OLD MAN HAD TAKEN LEAVE OF HIS SENSES AND EVERYBODY BEGAN AVOIDING HIS HUT.

HE GOT ON FAIRLY WELL IN THE BEGINNING. HE HAD MONEY AND HE COULD BUY THE FOOD HE WANTED.

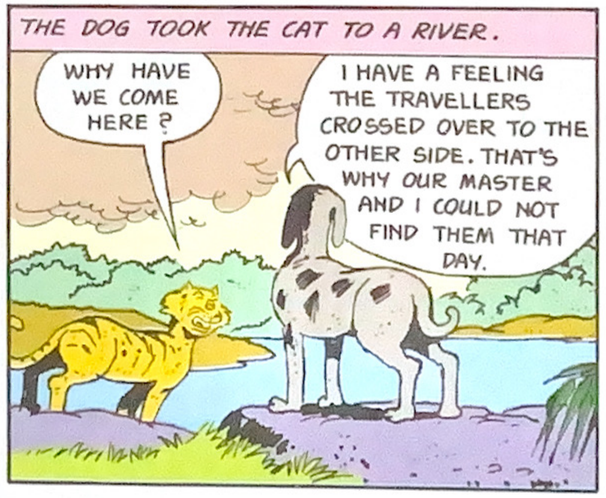

BUT IN COURSE OF TIME HIS MONEY BEGAN TO RUN OUT.
SEE HOW LITTLE WE'VE GOT TODAY.

WE'LL GET LESS TOMORROW. JUST WATCH.
IT'S NO USE GRUMBLING AND COMPLAINING.

IT'S TIME WE DID SOMETHING TO HELP OUR MASTER.
WHAT CAN WE DO?

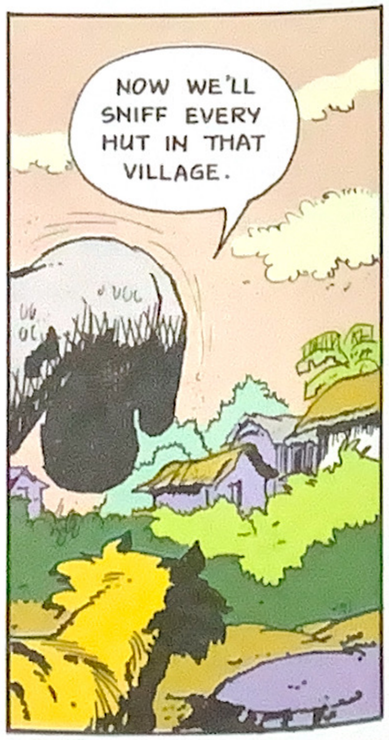
I AM GOING TO SEARCH FOR THE CONCH. YOU MAY COME IF YOU WANT TO.
OH, THIS DOG!

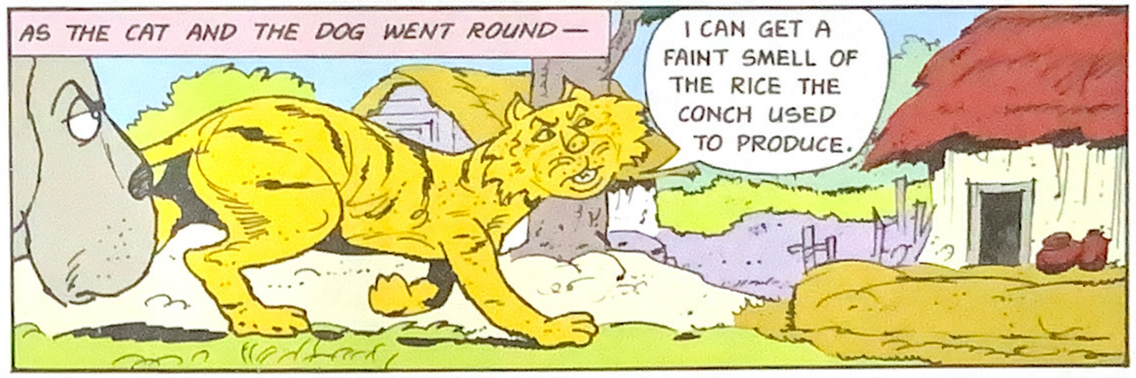
HE ALWAYS WANTS TO DO SOMETHING. WHY CAN'T HE JUST WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.


THE DOG TOOK THE CAT TO A RIVER.
WHY HAVE WE COME HERE?
I HAVE A FEELING THE TRAVELLERS CROSSED OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE. THAT'S WHY OUR MASTER AND I COULD NOT FIND THEM THAT DAY.

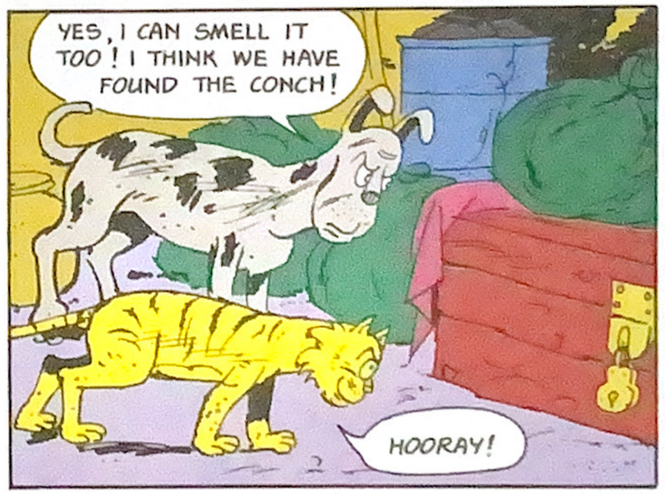
GET ON MY BACK. I'LL TAKE YOU ACROSS.

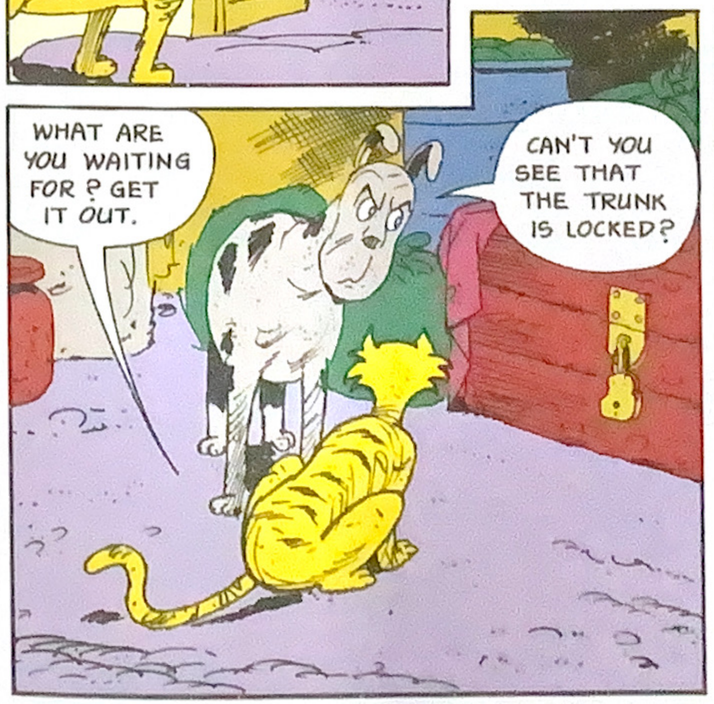
THE DOG SWAM WITH THE CAT TO THE OTHER SIDE.


NOW WE'LL SNIFF EVERY HUT IN THAT VILLAGE.


AS THE CAT AND THE DOG WENT ROUND—
I CAN GET A FAINT SMELL OF THE RICE THE CONCH USED TO PRODUCE.

IT SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM THAT WOODEN TRUNK.

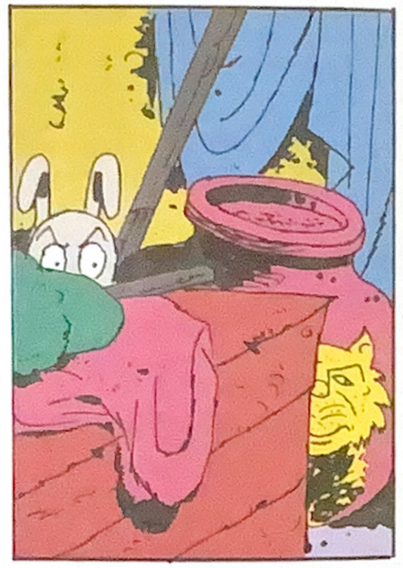

YES, I CAN SMELL IT TOO! I THINK WE HAVE FOUND THE CONCH!
HOORAY!

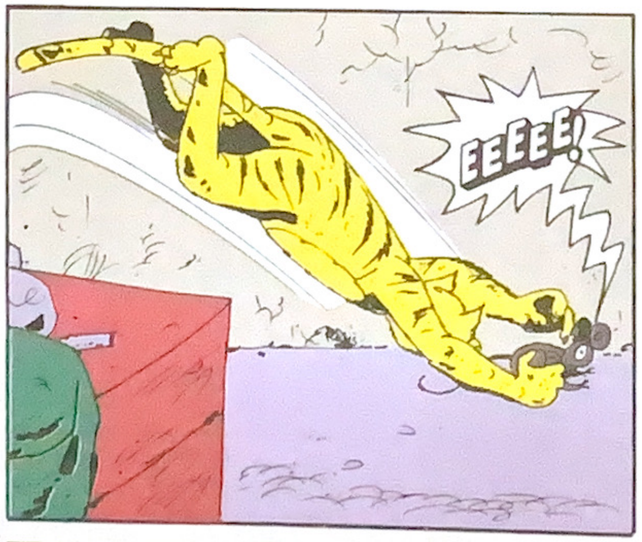

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GET IT OUT.
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT THE TRUNK IS LOCKED?

WE'LL HAVE TO BREAK INTO IT SOMEHOW. DO YOU THINK YOU COULD CATCH A RAT?
A RAT?

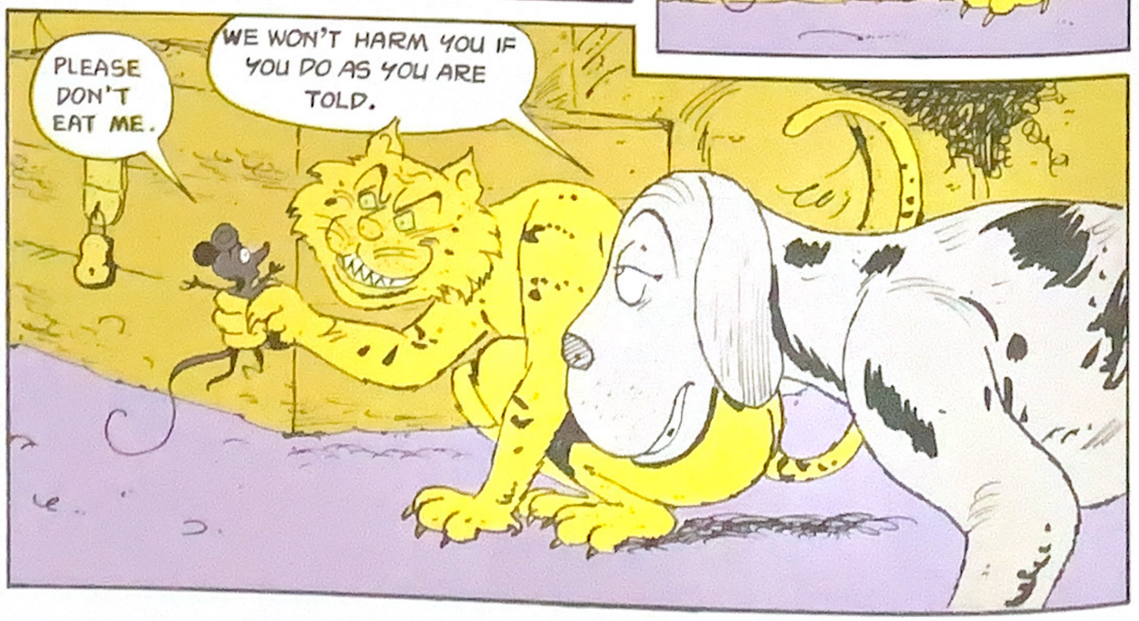
OF COURSE, I COULD! I AM OUT OF PRACTICE BUT... HUSH!

THERE'S ONE ...COMING OUT OF THAT HOLE!



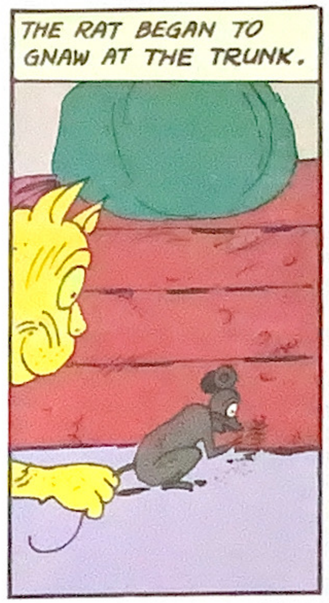

EEEEE!

HAVE MERCY ON ME, FRIEND CAT. I HAVE A LARGE FAMILY TO LOOK AFTER.


PLEASE DON'T EAT ME.
WE WON'T HARM YOU IF YOU DO AS YOU ARE TOLD.

THERE'S A CONCH IN THAT TRUNK. WE WANT YOU TO TAKE IT OUT FOR US.
THAT SHOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT.

THEN GET TO WORK. WE WILL SET YOU FREE AS SOON AS YOU FINISH.


THE RAT BEGAN TO GNAW AT THE TRUNK.

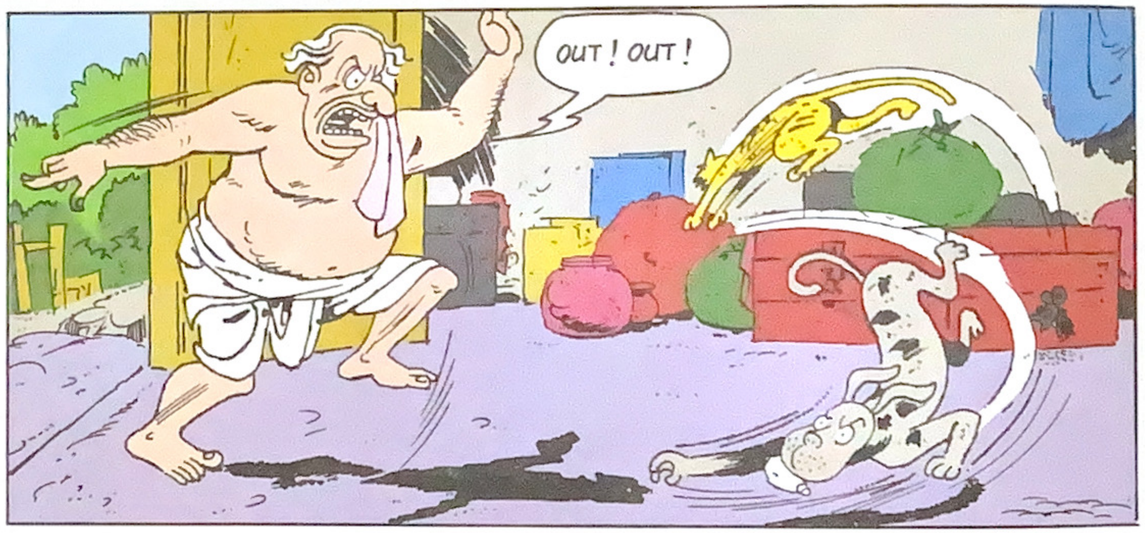
AFTER SOME TIME —
LET GO OF MY TAIL. I CAN GO IN NOW.

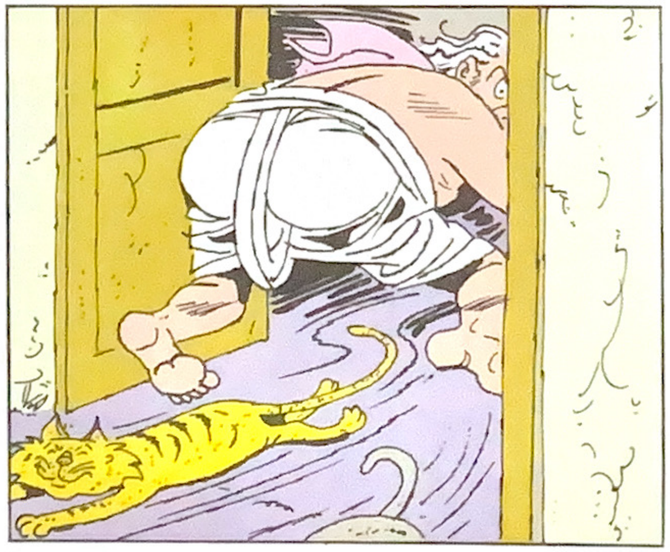
SUDDENLY —
SOMEONE'S COMING.

WHAT'S THAT RAT DOING?

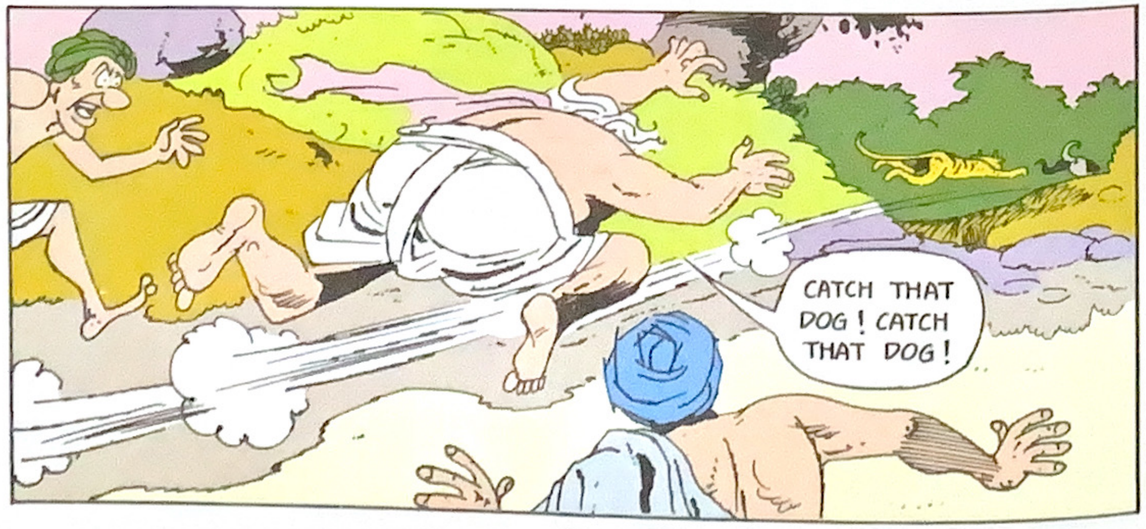
AH, HE'S PUSHING IT OUT.

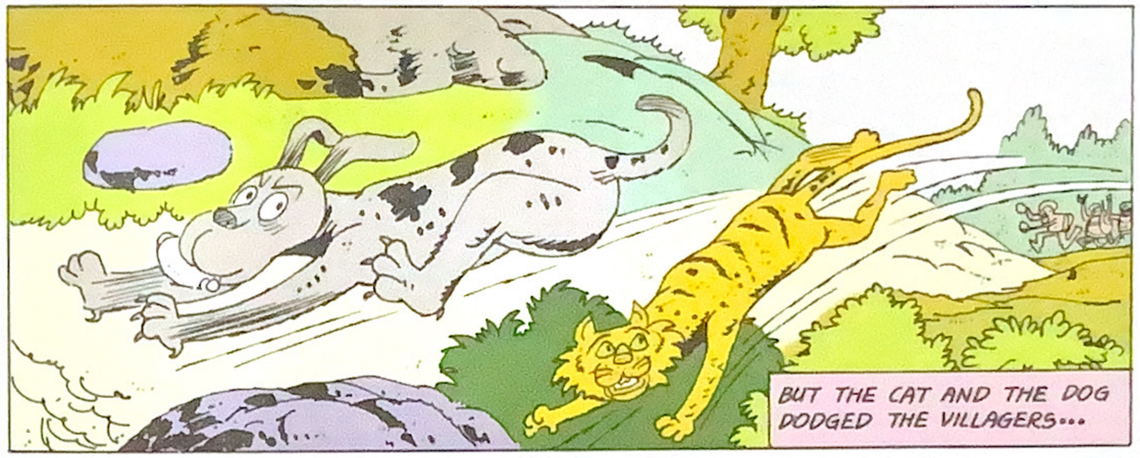
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

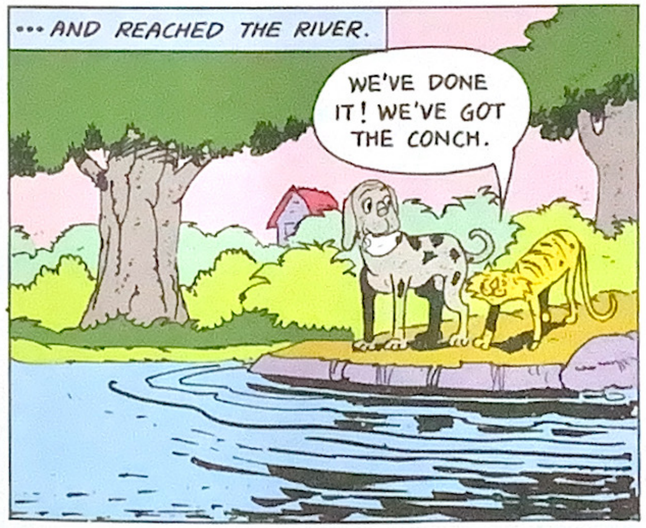

OUT! OUT!

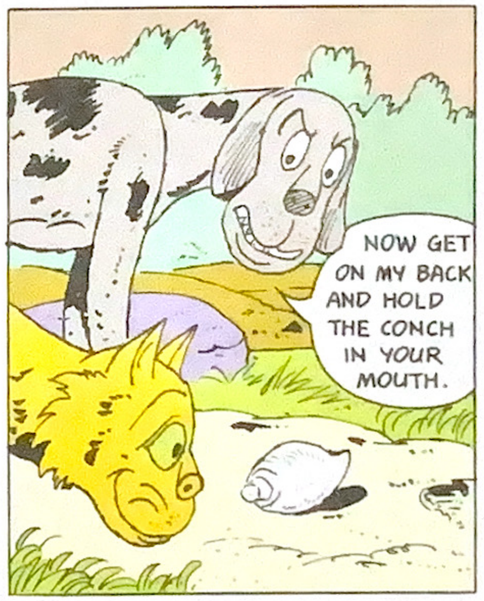


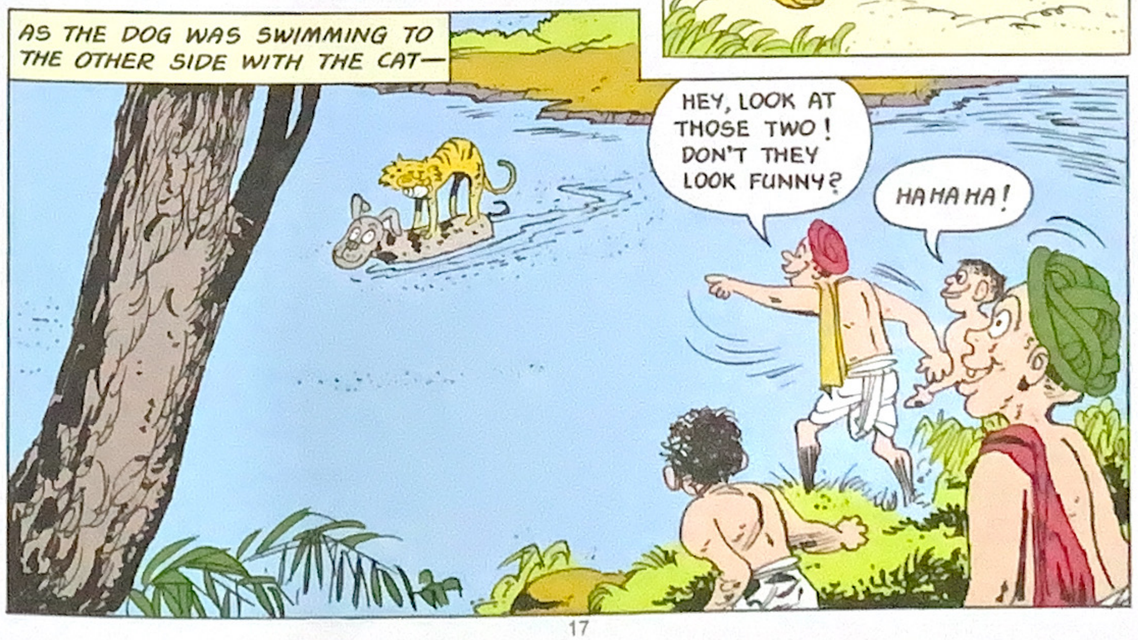
WHAT'S THAT IN HIS MOUTH?


CATCH THAT DOG! CATCH THAT DOG!

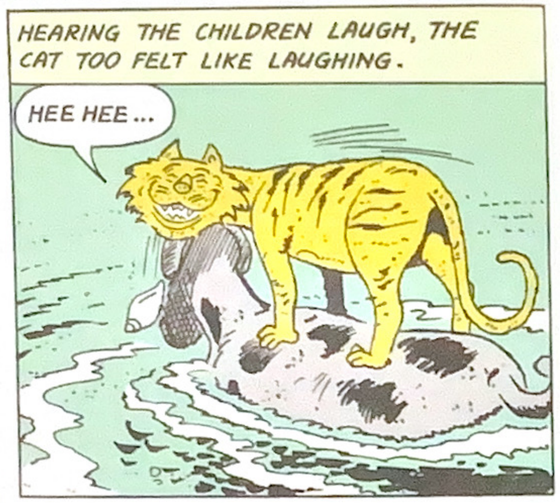

BUT THE CAT AND THE DOG DODGED THE VILLAGERS...

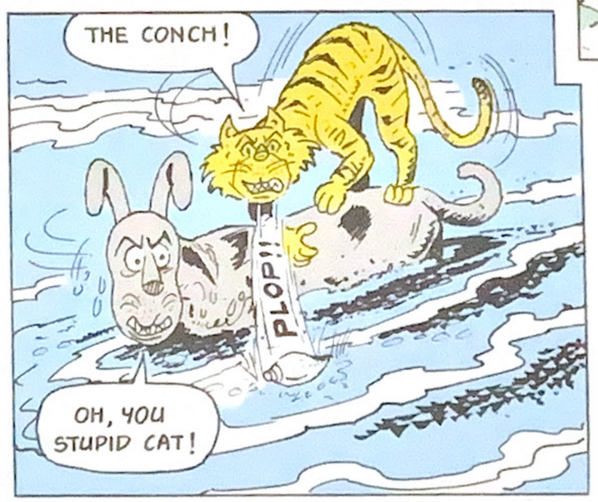

...AND REACHED THE RIVER.
WE'VE DONE IT! WE'VE GOT THE CONCH.

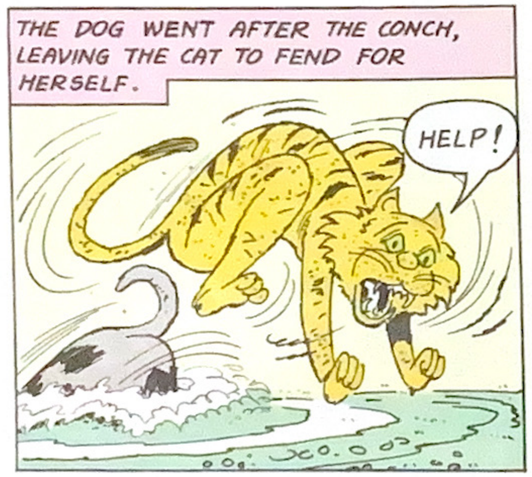

NOW GET ON MY BACK AND HOLD THE CONCH IN YOUR MOUTH.


AS THE DOG WAS SWIMMING TO THE OTHER SIDE WITH THE CAT—
HEY, LOOK AT THOSE TWO! DON'T THEY LOOK FUNNY?
HAHAHA!

HA HA HA!
HO HO HO!


HEARING THE CHILDREN LAUGH, THE CAT TOO FELT LIKE LAUGHING.
HEE HEE...


THE CONCH!
PLOP!!
OH, YOU STUPID CAT!

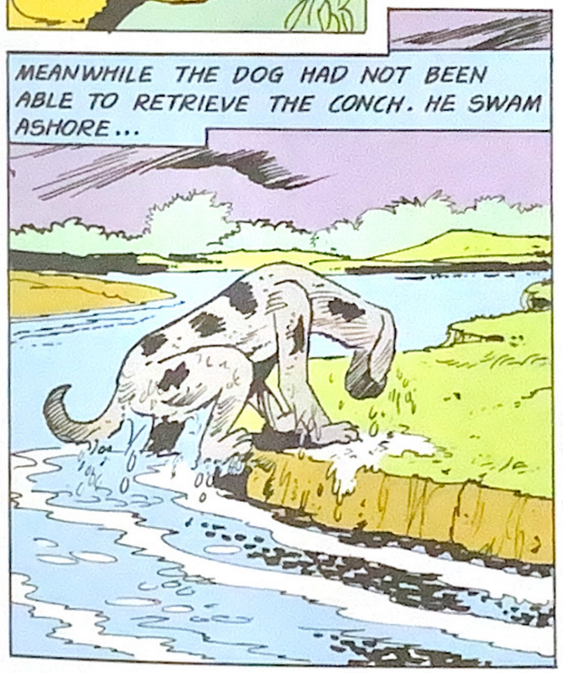

THE DOG WENT AFTER THE CONCH, LEAVING THE CAT TO FEND FOR HERSELF.
HELP!

SHE DID NOT KNOW HOW TO SWIM. BUT SHE BEAT HER LEGS WILDLY IN ALL DIRECTIONS...

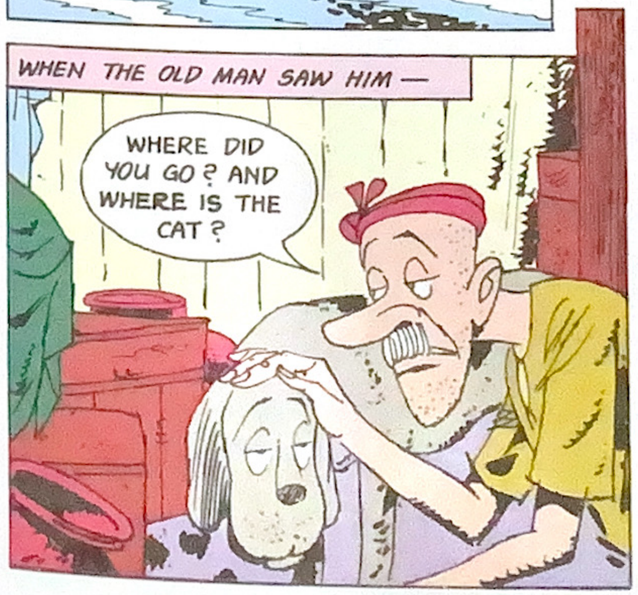
...AND SOMEHOW MANAGED TO REACH THE OTHER SIDE.
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TRUST A DOG.

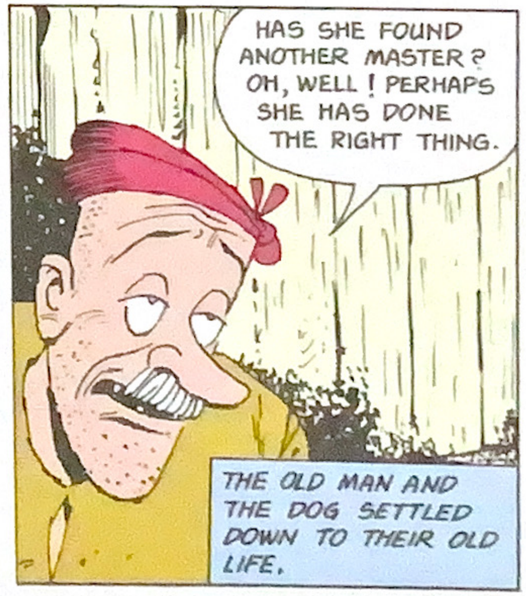
NOW I DARE NOT GO HOME. HE'LL BLAME ME FOR THE LOSS OF THE CONCH.

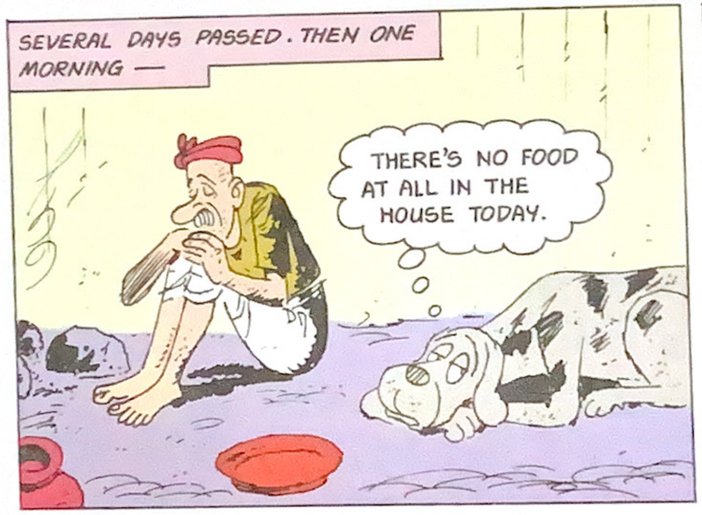
THE CAT CLIMBED A TREE AND HID HERSELF IN A HOLLOW.
I'LL STAY HERE FOR A FEW DAYS TILL HIS ANGER DIES DOWN.

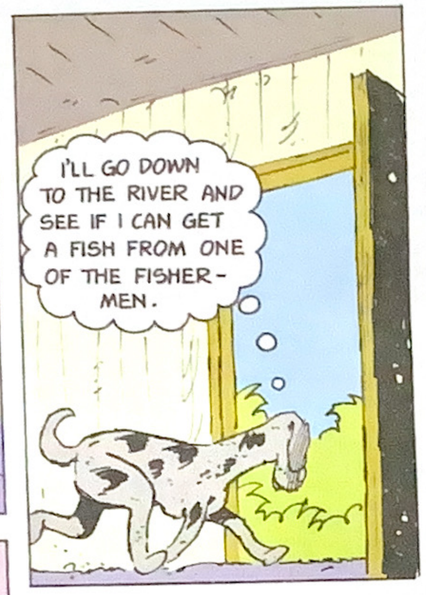

MEANWHILE THE DOG HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO RETRIEVE THE CONCH. HE SWAM ASHORE...

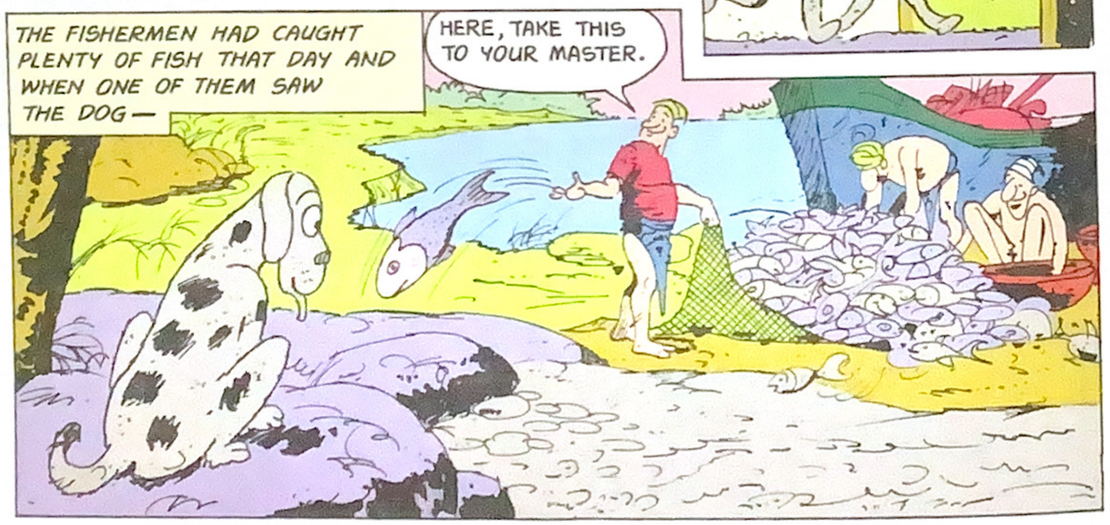
...AND RETURNED TO HIS MASTER.

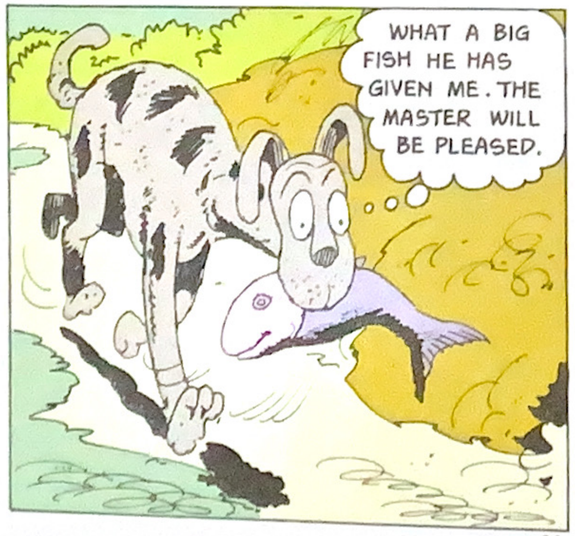

WHEN THE OLD MAN SAW HIM —
WHERE DID YOU GO? AND WHERE IS THE CAT?


HAS SHE FOUND ANOTHER MASTER? OH, WELL! PERHAPS SHE HAS DONE THE RIGHT THING.
THE OLD MAN AND THE DOG SETTLED DOWN TO THEIR OLD LIFE.

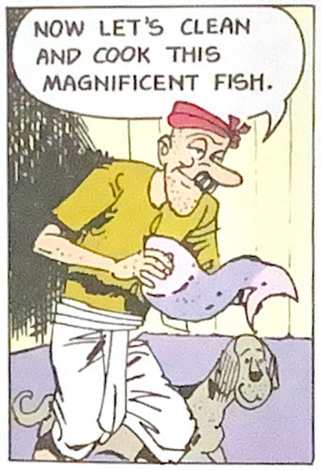

SEVERAL DAYS PASSED. THEN ONE MORNING —
THERE'S NO FOOD AT ALL IN THE HOUSE TODAY.

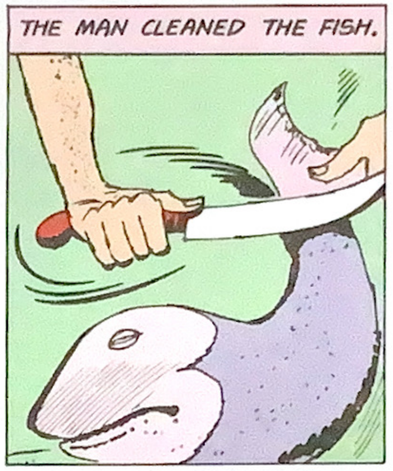

I'LL GO DOWN TO THE RIVER AND SEE IF I CAN GET A FISH FROM ONE OF THE FISHER-MEN.

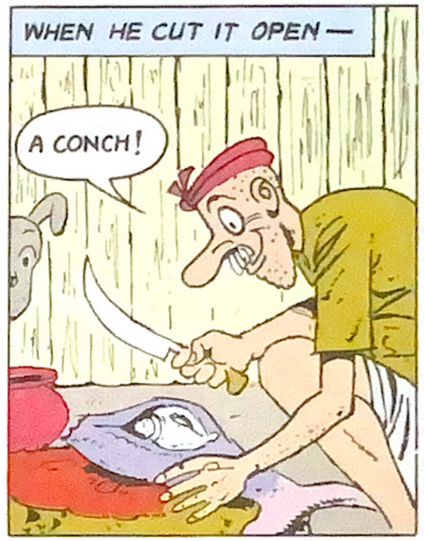

THE FISHERMEN HAD CAUGHT PLENTY OF FISH THAT DAY AND WHEN ONE OF THEM SAW THE DOG —
HERE, TAKE THIS TO YOUR MASTER.


WHAT A BIG FISH HE HAS GIVEN ME. THE MASTER WILL BE PLEASED.

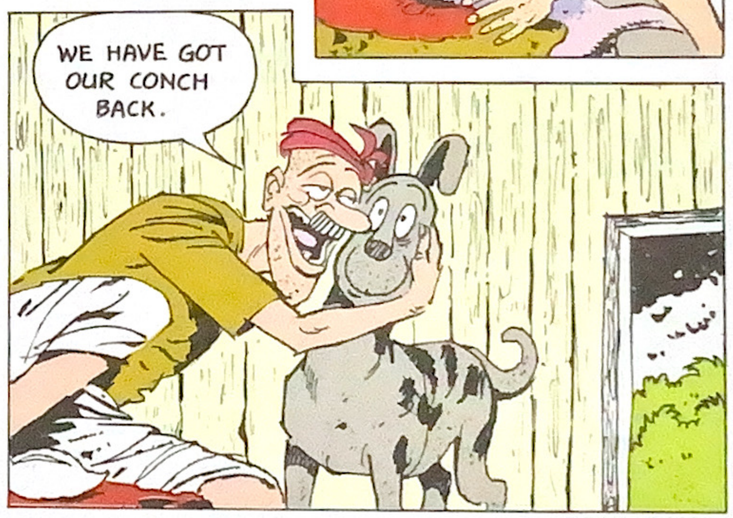
THE OLD MAN WAS INDEED DELIGHTED.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT YOU!

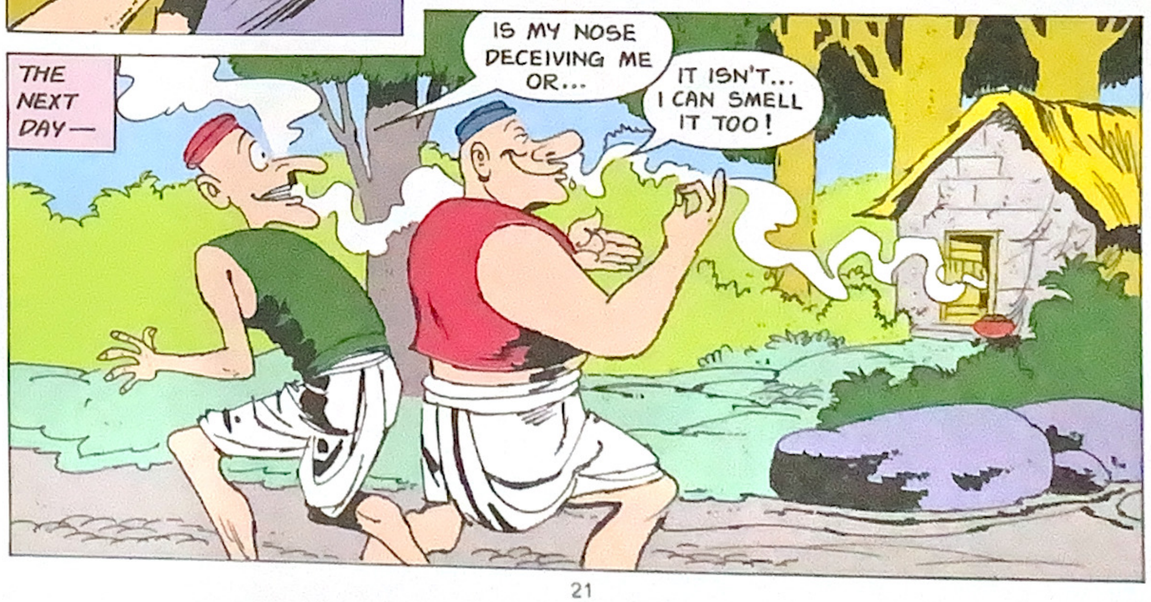

NOW LET'S CLEAN AND COOK THIS MAGNIFICENT FISH.

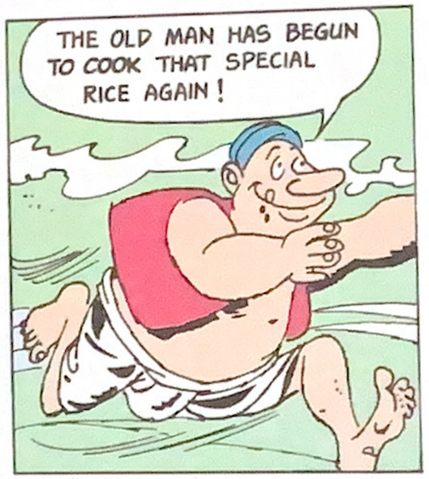

THE MAN CLEANED THE FISH.

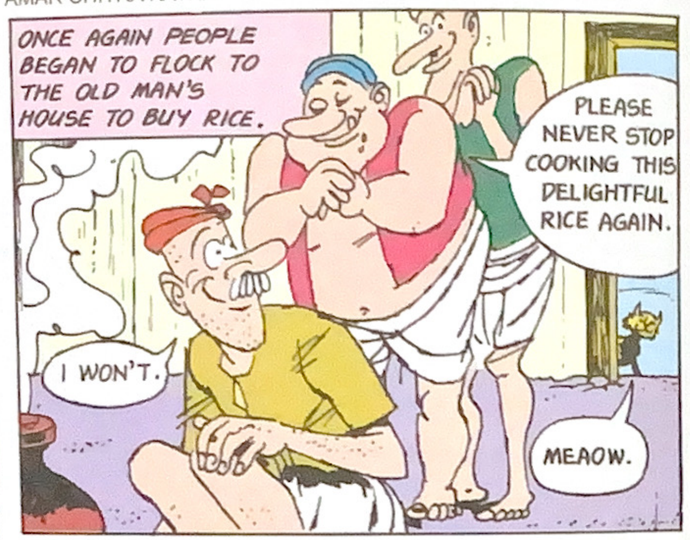

WHEN HE CUT IT OPEN —
A CONCH!

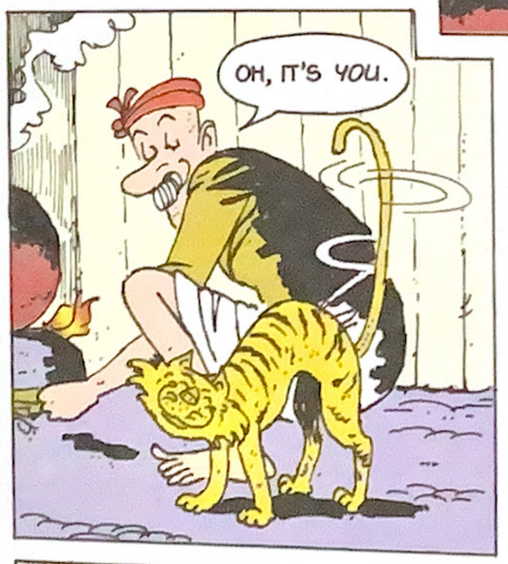
I...I THINK IT'S THE SAME CONCH WHICH WE LOST.

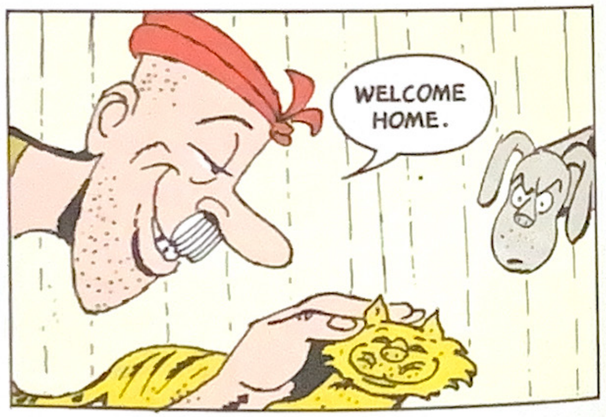

WE HAVE GOT OUR CONCH BACK.

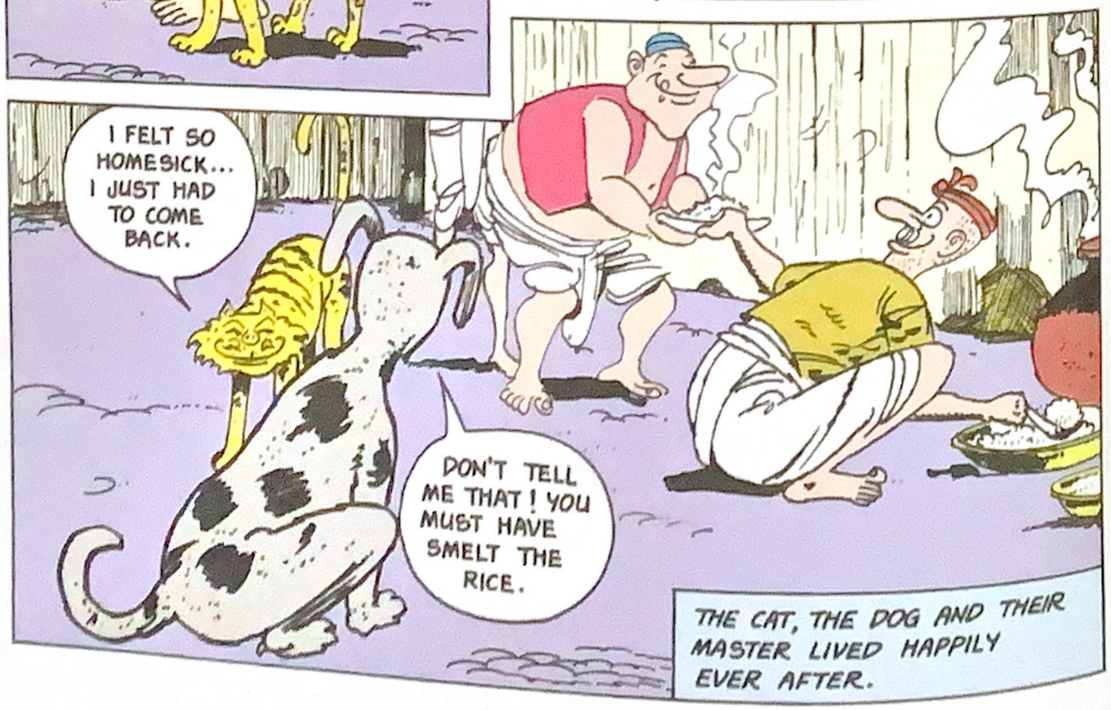

THE NEXT DAY —
IS MY NOSE DECEIVING ME OR...
IT ISN'T... I CAN SMELL IT TOO!

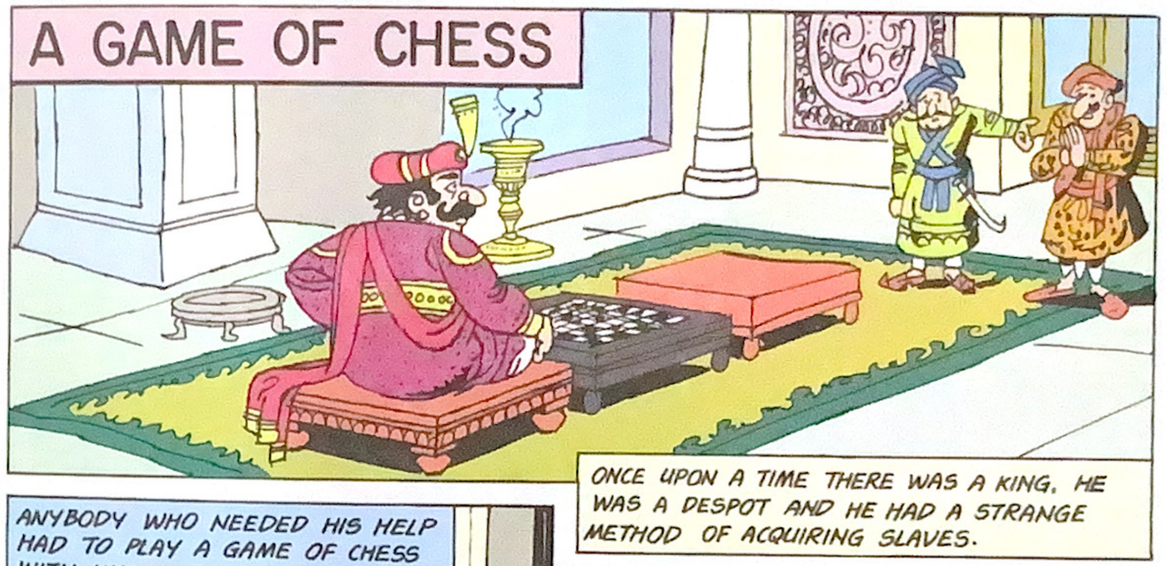

THE OLD MAN HAS BEGUN TO COOK THAT SPECIAL RICE AGAIN!

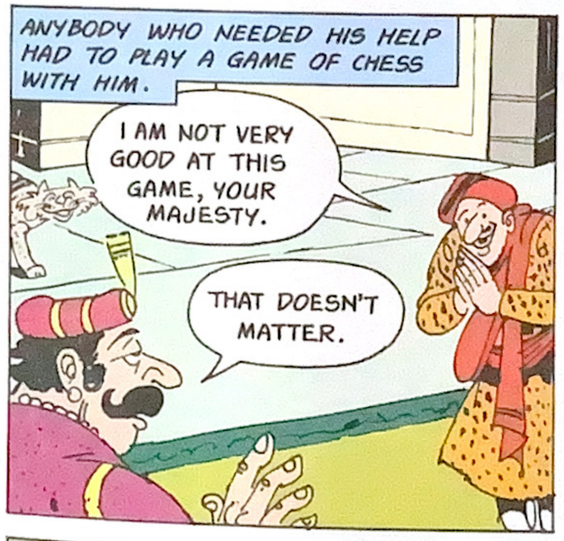

ONCE AGAIN PEOPLE BEGAN TO FLOCK TO THE OLD MAN'S HOUSE TO BUY RICE.
PLEASE NEVER STOP COOKING THIS DELIGHTFUL RICE AGAIN.
I WON'T.
MEAOW.


OH, IT'S YOU.

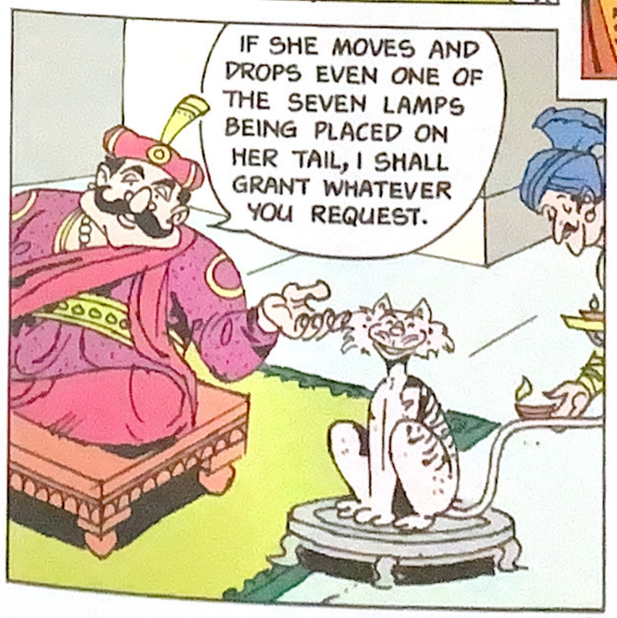

WELCOME HOME.


I FELT SO HOMESICK... I JUST HAD TO COME BACK.
DON'T TELL ME THAT! YOU MUST HAVE SMELT THE RICE.
THE CAT, THE DOG AND THEIR MASTER LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.


A GAME OF CHESS
ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A KING. HE WAS A DESPOT AND HE HAD A STRANGE METHOD OF ACQUIRING SLAVES.


ANYBODY WHO NEEDED HIS HELP HAD TO PLAY A GAME OF CHESS WITH HIM.
I AM NOT VERY GOOD AT THIS GAME, YOUR MAJESTY.
THAT DOESN'T MATTER.

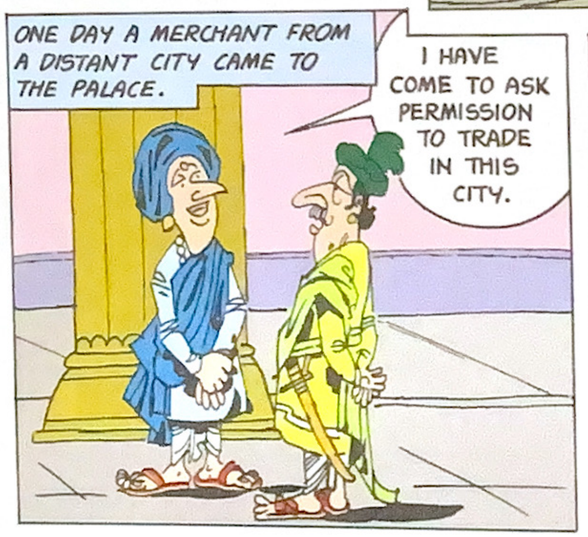
IT'S NOT YOUR SKILL, BUT THIS CAT'S THAT WILL DECIDE THE OUTCOME OF THE GAME.
CAT?


IF SHE MOVES AND DROPS EVEN ONE OF THE SEVEN LAMPS BEING PLACED ON HER TAIL, I SHALL GRANT WHATEVER YOU REQUEST.

BUT IF SHE SHOULD SIT WITHOUT MOVING TILL THE END OF THE GAME, YOU SHALL BECOME MY SLAVE.

SHALL WE START?

UNFORTUNATELY FOR ANYONE WHO PLAYED AGAINST THE KING, THE CAT WAS WELL TRAINED. SO THE KING NEVER LOST.
YOU ARE NOW MY SLAVE...
ULP!

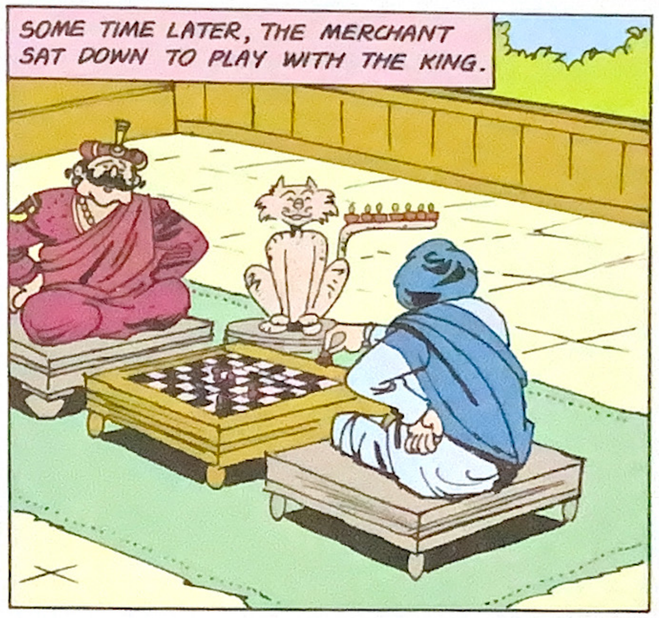

ONE DAY A MERCHANT FROM A DISTANT CITY CAME TO THE PALACE.
I HAVE COME TO ASK PERMISSION TO TRADE IN THIS CITY.

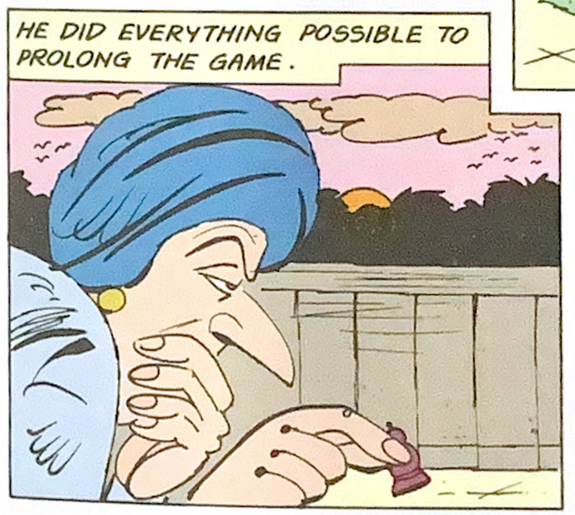
CAN YOU PLAY CHESS?
OH, YES! I AM VERY GOOD AT IT, IN FACT. BUT WHY DO YOU ASK?

WHEN THE MINISTER EXPLAINED WHY —
WHAT A STRANGE RULE! YOU HAVE TO PLAY CHESS WITH THE KING BEFORE YOU CAN ASK A FAVOUR OF HIM.

WELL...?
TAKE ME TO THE KING.

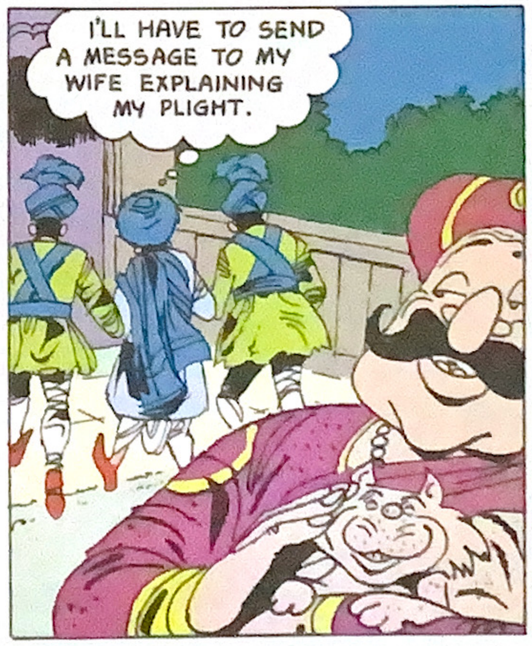
I HAVE COME A LONG DISTANCE AND I CANNOT GO BACK EMPTY-HANDED.

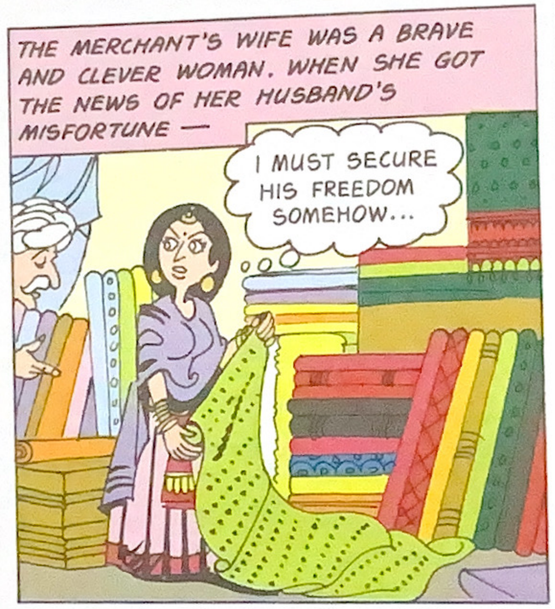

SOME TIME LATER, THE MERCHANT SAT DOWN TO PLAY WITH THE KING.


HE DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PROLONG THE GAME.

IT WENT ON AND ON.

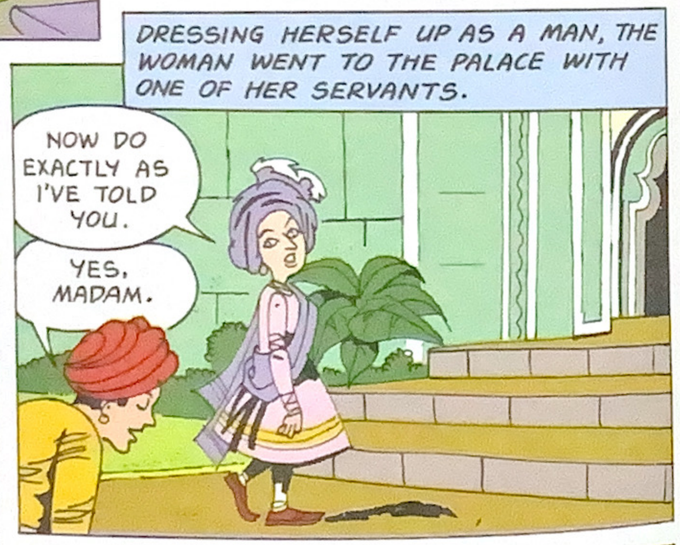
BUT FINALLY, TO HIS HORROR —
I HAVE WON. THE GAME IS OVER AND THE CAT HAS NOT MOVED!
I AM DONE FOR.


I'LL HAVE TO SEND A MESSAGE TO MY WIFE EXPLAINING MY PLIGHT.


THE MERCHANT'S WIFE WAS A BRAVE AND CLEVER WOMAN. WHEN SHE GOT THE NEWS OF HER HUSBAND'S MISFORTUNE —
I MUST SECURE HIS FREEDOM SOMEHOW...

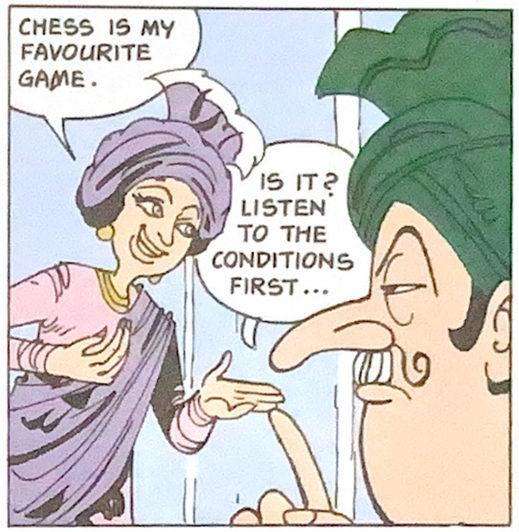
...AND TEACH THAT WICKED KING A LESSON. HOW DARE HE LET A CAT DECIDE MY HUSBAND'S FATE!

CAT! THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA.

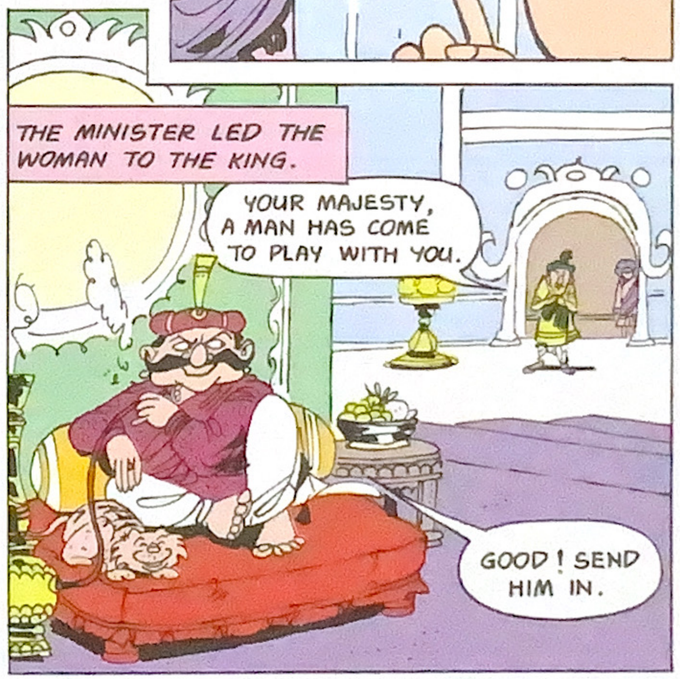

DRESSING HERSELF UP AS A MAN, THE WOMAN WENT TO THE PALACE WITH ONE OF HER SERVANTS.
NOW DO EXACTLY AS I'VE TOLD YOU.
YES, MADAM.

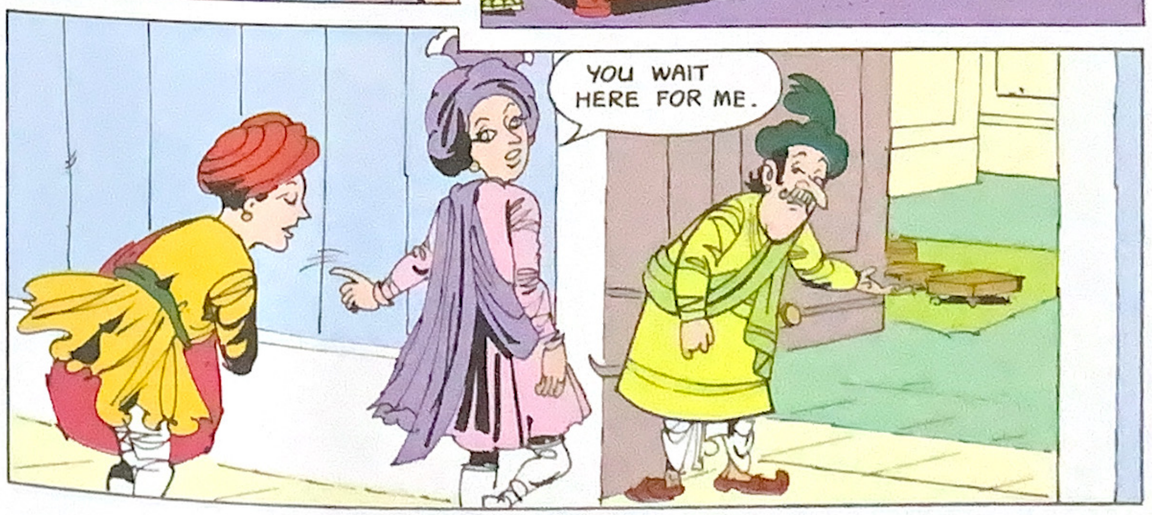
I HAVE COME TO ASK A FAVOUR OF THE KING.
YOU MAY ASK HIM FOR ANYTHING.

BUT FIRST YOU'LL HAVE TO PLAY CHESS WITH HIM.
CHESS? HOW DELIGHTFUL!


CHESS IS MY FAVOURITE GAME.
IS IT? LISTEN TO THE CONDITIONS FIRST...

WHEN THE MINISTER HAD EXPLAINED THE CONDITIONS —
IS THAT ALL? OH, THAT CAT WILL COLLAPSE BEFORE THE GAME ENDS!

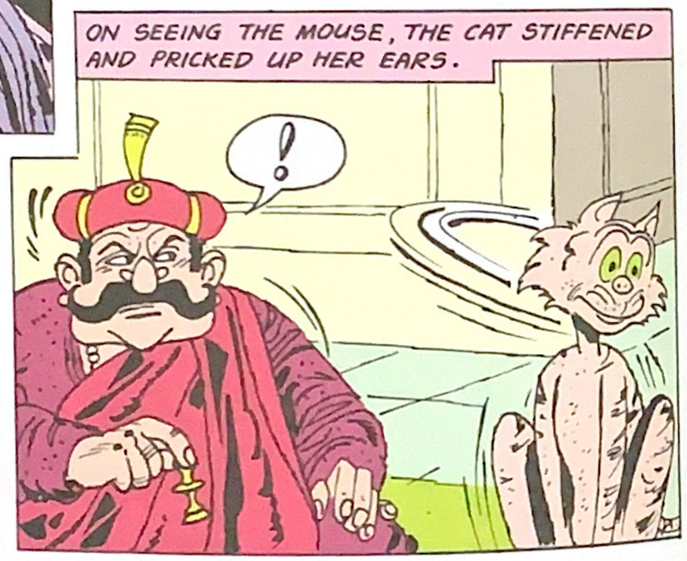

THE MINISTER LED THE WOMAN TO THE KING.
YOUR MAJESTY, A MAN HAS COME TO PLAY WITH YOU.
GOOD! SEND HIM IN.


YOU WAIT HERE FOR ME.

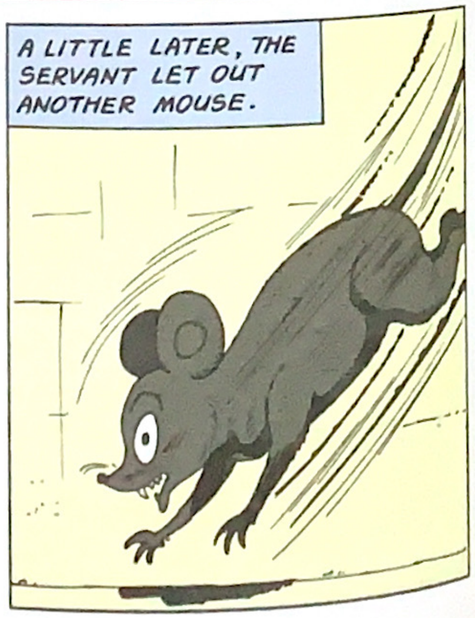
THE GAME BEGAN. THE KING PLAYED CONFIDENTLY.
THIS MAN TOO WILL SOON BE MY SLAVE.

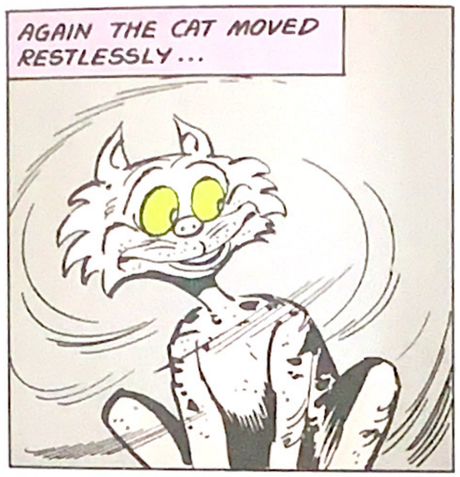
AFTER SOME TIME, THE SERVANT WHO WAS STANDING OUTSIDE...

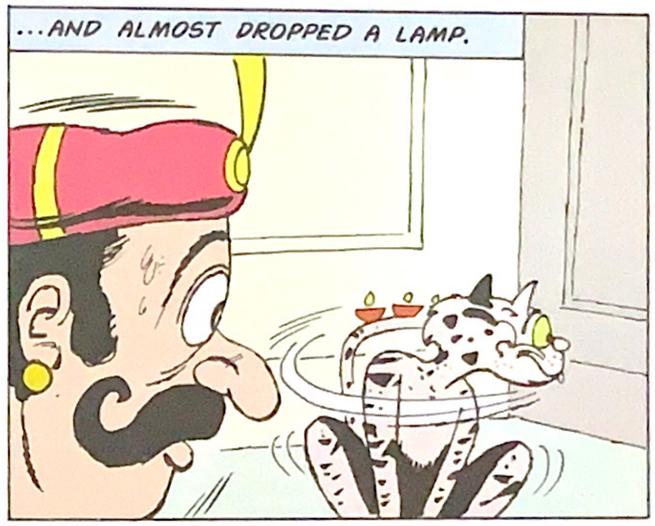
... RELEASED A MOUSE INTO THE PLAYING ROOM.


ON SEEING THE MOUSE, THE CAT STIFFENED AND PRICKED UP HER EARS.
!

BUT THE KING GLARED FIERCELY AT HER AND SHE MADE HERSELF IMMOBILE AGAIN.

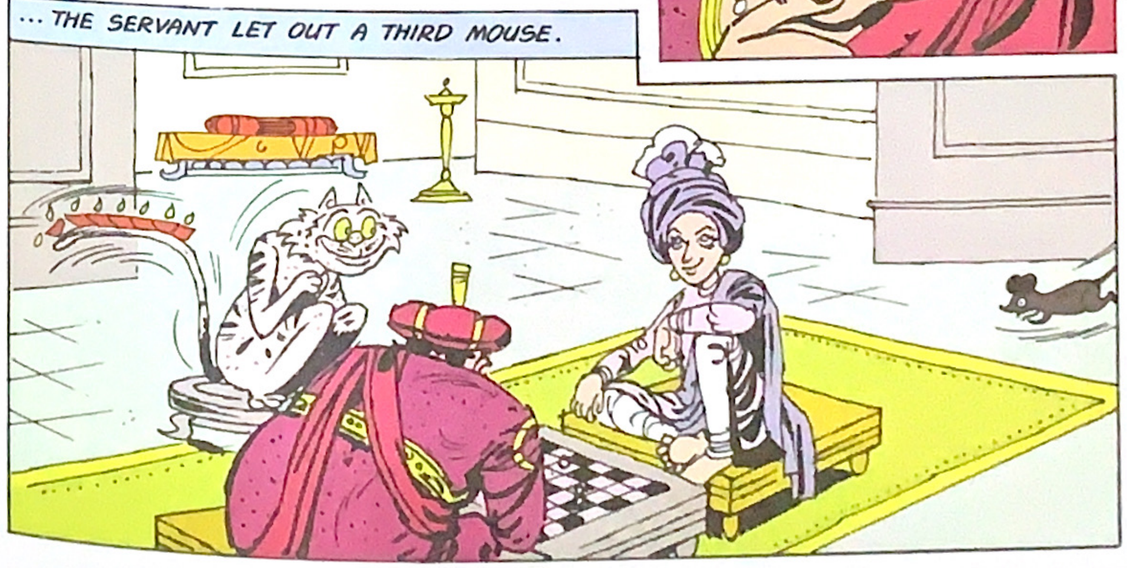

A LITTLE LATER, THE SERVANT LET OUT ANOTHER MOUSE.


AGAIN THE CAT MOVED RESTLESSLY...

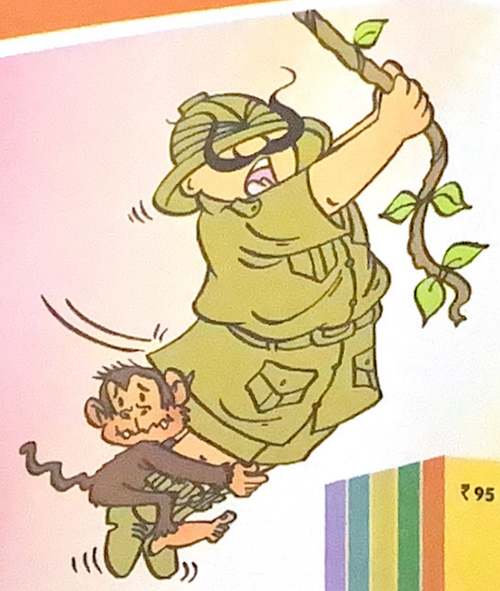

...AND ALMOST DROPPED A LAMP.

I'D BETTER END THE GAME FAST. SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THAT CAT TODAY.
THE KING IS DESPERATE. NOW I MUST BE ALERT. THANK GOD MY HUSBAND TAUGHT ME ALL THE TRICKY MOVES!

AS THE KING TRIED FRANTICALLY TO FINISH THE GAME...


... THE SERVANT LET OUT A THIRD MOUSE.

TINKLE
DOUBLE DIGEST



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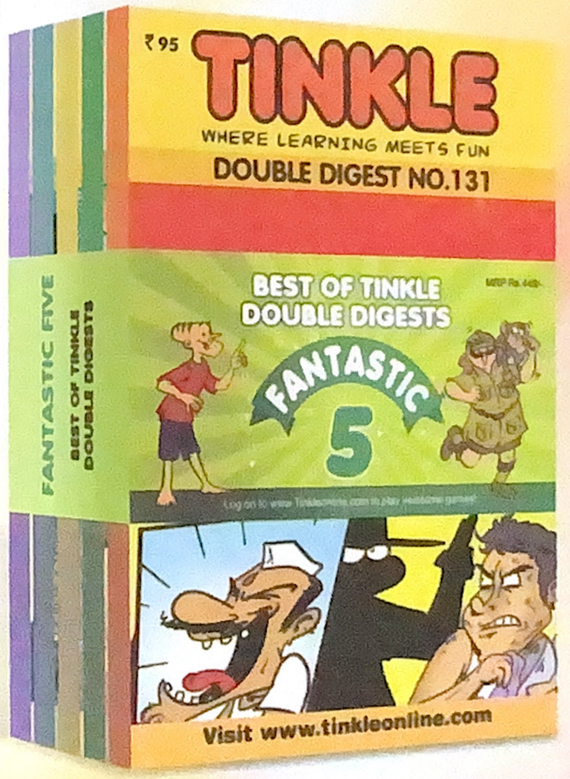

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